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OF THE
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PART SECOND.

CONTAINING

THE SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN DUTY.

SECTION I. (Q. 39 TO 81.)—THE LAW.

BY THE EDITOR.

S. D. F. Salmond

Edinburgh:

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WITH
THE PUBLISHERS'
COMPLIMENTS.

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PART SECOND.

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The Catechism began by stating the great end for which we exist, and the rule which we have received from God in order to make that end good. It explained that this rule is 'the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,' and it then proceeded to notice the two chief things which these Scriptures are intended to teach us. The first of these was, 'What man is to believe concerning God,' and Questions 4-38 have dealt with that. The second was, 'What duty God requires of man,' and with this the rest of the Catechism is occupied. Questions 39-107 set forth with admirable clearness and completeness what we are to be to God and to our fellow-men, how we are to conduct ourselves in the different relations of life, what laws are given us to keep, and what aids are provided for us in the doing of God's will. The statement of doctrine is thus followed by a statement of duty. And the two things are vitally connected. The doctrines of the Christian religion are not things merely for the head, neither are its precepts so many counsels which stand by themselves like the maxims of the sages. The doctrines are all meant to prompt to right practice and to make a holy life possible. The precepts are all rooted in the facts and doctrines of Revelation, and draw their life and power from them. 'My little children,' says the Apostle John, 'these things write I unto you, that ye sin not;'

and again, 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' (1 John ii. 1 ; v. 5). So, too, religion and morality, while in a certain sense distinct things, are intimately connected. Religion reveals what God is to us; morality, what we are to God. These two are partners which work to each other's hand. According to the Scriptures religion leads to morality, and morality leans on religion. Morality is the practical issue and manifestation of religion, and religion is the strength and life of morality. Religion divorced from morals is stripped of its reality; morals divorced from religion are stripped of their security and robbed of their perfection.

THE EXPOSITION.

SECTION I.—THE LAW.

QUESTION 39. *WHAT is the duty which God requireth of man?*

Answer. The duty which God requireth of man, is obedience to his revealed will.^a

^a Micah vi. 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? 1 Sam. xv. 22. And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

The duty which God requireth of man: the word 'duty' is one of the greatest terms ever coined by language. It expresses at once the subjection and the dignity of man—*subjection* in his relation to God, *dignity* in his relation to other creatures of earth. It means simply that which is *due*. If God is our Creator, there must be something *due* from us to Him, something which He will *require*. If He is more than our Creator, He has further claims upon us.

‘Duties are ours, events are His.’ Is obedience to His revealed will : that which is due from us to Him is described by one large and comprehensive term—*obedience*. That is what every superior is entitled to require from those inferior to him. Much more has the Creator the right to receive it from the creature, and by a still higher claim does a Redeeming God expect it from redeemed man. The standard of our obedience is stated to be His *will*. There are two senses in which He is said to ‘will.’ He ‘wills’ in the sense of determining what is to be done *for* us or *with* us ; which is the meaning of the word when it is used of the ‘decrees’ of God, as in Question 7. He ‘wills’ also in the sense of prescribing what is to be done *by* us. This is called His *preceptive* will. This *will* has been *revealed* or unveiled to us, and the Catechism proceeds to indicate that it has been revealed in more than one way. The measure of this revelation of the will of God to us is the measure of our duty. Obedience is the confessed duty of the child to the parent, and wherever our Heavenly Father speaks, it is for us to hear His voice and honour it. The Old Testament, though so largely occupied with a system of ceremonies and sacrifices, sets obedience consistently before Israel as the end of all. In addition to the great declarations made by Samuel and Micah, which are noticed in the proof-texts, and which deserve the most attentive study, consider such passages in the books of Moses as Deut. x. 12, 13. The New Testament puts a higher glory still on obedience. It pronounces the doing of God’s will to be the way of entrance into the kingdom of heaven, and the bond of our kinship with Christ. (See Matt. vii. 21 ; Mark iii. 35.) It declares obedience to be the end which God’s election has in view (1 Pet. i. 2). It speaks of the Holy Ghost as God’s gift to those who obey Him (Acts v. 32). Of Christ Himself, too, it says that He learned obedience by the things which He

suffered (Heb. v. 8), and became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him (Heb. v. 9).

QUESTION 40. *WHAT did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?*

Answer. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.^a

^a Rom. ii. 14. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves. V. 15. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another. Rom. x. 5. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

If what God requires is obedience and if the measure of that obedience is nothing less than His will, the question at once arises—how do we know that will? The Catechism answers this by pointing to a particular revelation which God gave of His will, one which was made from the beginning and in which all men have shared.

The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience: we need a rule, and we have never been without one. When God created man, He put that within him which was to be an expression of His own holy will and a guide to duty. In man's nature He made a revelation of Himself, and in man's own heart He planted a law, by which man should not be left ignorant of what was required of him. **Was the moral law:** this rule which God erected within man is called the *moral* law, because it speaks of conduct or morals. It differs from all other kinds of law. There are physical laws or laws of nature, which are simply the names which we give to what is observed to occur regularly in the material world. We notice, for example, that things unsupported have a uniform

tendency to fall towards the centre of the earth, and we say they do so by the law of gravitation. There are *civil* laws—that is to say, statutes by which a government declares what is due by its people. There are also other Divine laws, which are termed *positive* laws, such as the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament. These are not binding upon all men or at all times, but derive their authority from their being specially or positively enacted, and remain binding only so long as that enactment continues. The moral law is distinguished from all these in that it is a rule of right and wrong, which is binding on all men at all times, and has its authority in itself. That in the beginning man received such a rule of life from God is shown by the existence of a sense of right and wrong, and by the action, more or less clearly seen, of *conscience* in all men. As a witness within ourselves to what God's holy will is, the moral law is the highest rule of duty. A great thinker has declared the two sublimest things in the universe to be the starry heavens above and the moral law within.

QUESTION 41. *WHERE is the moral law summarily comprehended?*

Answer. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.^a

^a Deut. x. 4. And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord spake unto you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly: and the Lord gave them unto me.

The law of right and wrong, which was at first imprinted on man's own heart and nature, was the possession of the Gentile as well as the Jew. The New Testament recognises that the heathen, who had no written law of moral duty, were, nevertheless, not without a rule of life, and consequently not

free of responsibility to God (Rom. ii. 14, 15). But the law of right and wrong was afterwards given in more distinct and definite form to one people, and through that people again to all mankind. The books of Exodus (ch. xix., xx.) and Deuteronomy (ch. v.) report the circumstances under which this new form of the law was communicated at Sinai. They tell us of the Divine voice that came to Moses out of the thick darkness of the cloud-wrapped Mount, revealing the precepts which were written on tables of stone for the observance of Israel, and afterwards deposited in the Ark of the Covenant (Exod. xxv. 16; 1 Kings viii. 9). The New Testament also speaks of Moses as occupying the part of 'a mediator' in the giving of the law, and further connects the agency of angels with it (Acts vii. 53; Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 2). The rule which was at first given at large was thus set forth again in brief and distinct terms and in public form. Hence it is said here that it is **summarily comprehended**, that is, summed up and shortly stated **in the ten commandments**. This law of the ten commandments, or the **Ten Words**, as it is simply termed in the Old Testament, is also called 'the Covenant' (Deut. iv. 13); 'the Two Tables' (Deut. ix. 10); 'the Words of the Covenant' (Exod. xxxiv. 28); or, 'the Tables of the Covenant' (Deut. ix. 9), because it marked a solemn engagement between God and the chosen people. More frequently it is called 'the Testimony' (Exod. xvi. 34), or 'the Two Tables of Testimony' (Exod. xxxi. 18), because it was a witness to the will of God as regards the life and character of His people, and formed His testimony against men's sinful inclinations. It has also come to be known as the *Decalogue*, a term taken from two Greek words meaning the *ten words*. It is found in two forms, with slight differences, in the Old Testament; namely, in Exodus xx. 1-17, and in Deut. v. 6-21. While the Bible makes the com-

mandments ten in number, it does not mark them off distinctly as first, second, third, &c. So it happens that they have been differently arranged. The Jewish Rabbis took what we term the Preface to be the first Word or Commandment, and retained the number ten by combining what we receive as the first and second commandments into a single precept. The Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Luther keep the Preface as a Preface, make one commandment out of those which we call the first and second, and then divide the one which we regard as the tenth into two. The division which our Catechism follows is a very ancient one, and is better than these others. For there is nothing of the nature of a precept in the Preface; there is a clear distinction between what it rightly calls the first commandment and the second; and when Paul refers to the law in Rom. xiii. 9, he does not hint that there are two distinct kinds of coveting dealt with in two distinct precepts. A larger division of the Decalogue is into two great parts or tables, of which the one embraces the first four commandments, and treats of our duty to God, while the other embraces the remaining six, and states our duty to man. Some divide it, however, into two tables of five commandments each, regarding our duty to our parents, which is dealt with in the fifth, as closely akin to our duty to God. In this way we should have five precepts bearing on the duties of *piety*, and five bearing on those of *probity*. These Ten Words or Commandments continue under the Gospel itself to be the rule of duty. Perfect obedience to their letter and their spirit would be perfect morality. Nothing which they permit can be wrong; nothing that they forbid can be right. Our Lord Himself commends them to the rich young ruler as the Divine summary of duty, saying to him, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments' (Matt. xix. 17). To see all that they are meant to be, and to

understand how deep and spiritual they are in their requirements, we must look to what He says of them in the second section of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 17-48). There He declares that He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. He has done this by revealing its meaning as had never been done before, and by giving us, through the renewing grace of His Spirit, a new power to keep it inwardly. Speaking of the tables of stone on which the law was written, a scholar of our own day has said: "They must have perished, or at least disappeared, when the Ark itself perished or disappeared in the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. But their contents have survived the wreck, not only of the Ark and Temple, but of the whole system of worship of which they were the basis. The TEN COMMANDMENTS delivered on Mount Sinai have become embedded in the heart of the religion which has succeeded. Side by side with the Prayer of our Lord, and with the Creed of His Church, they appear inscribed on our churches, read from our altars, taught to our children, as the foundation of all morality."

QUESTION 42. *WHAT is the sum of the ten commandments?*

Answer. The sum of the ten commandments is, To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves.^a

^a Matt. xxii. 37. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. V. 38. This is the first and great commandment. V. 39. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. V. 40. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

If the whole moral law is now summed up for us in the ten commandments, these commandments

themselves may be summed up in the one supreme law of love, as shown first to God and then to men. We have Christ's own authority for thus reading the intention of the commandments. The proof-text reminds us of what He said in this way to the lawyer who came tempting Him with the question about the greatest commandment in the law.

The sum of the ten commandments is, To love the Lord our God with all our heart : the precept so expressed is a very deep and far-reaching one. It points us first of all to the seat of all real obedience. Unless God's law is kept with the heart, it is not really honoured ; and unless our love to God is from the heart it is lifeless and worthless. The words which follow are designed to express the completeness of the obedience, the perfection of the love we are to render. It is to be **with all our soul**, that is, ardently and with all our feeling : **with all our strength**, that is, vigorously and with all our power : **and with all our mind**, that is, intelligently and with the full consent of our understanding. It is to be no lip-love, no half-devotion, no ignorant or superstitious obedience. We are to love Him with our entire nature, with our whole selves. **And our neighbour as ourselves :** this is the golden rule of doing to others as we would have them do to us—the law which James (ch. ii. 8) calls 'the royal law.' It is the 'one word' in which Paul declares that 'all the law is fulfilled' (Gal. v. 14). The best of the heathen before Christ knew little or nothing of the majesty of this precept. To them none were neighbours but those with whom they were immediately connected—kinsmen, friends, and the like. But Christ has taught us to recognise in every man a brother, and a neighbour in every one who has need of us. Recall, *e.g.*, His great parable of the good Samaritan (Luke x. 29-37). What place this law has in the Christian life is also seen by Paul's lofty Psalm of charity or love in 1

Corinthians xiii. These two precepts of love are vitally connected. Love to God carries with it love to man, and the latter is the test of the former (1 John iii. 14 ; iv. 20).

QUESTION 43. *WHAT is the preface to the ten commandments ?*

Answer. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*^a

^a Exod. xx. 2.

A 'preface' is something 'spoken before' in order to prepare the way for something else. It is needful that they to whom a law is given should know from whom it proceeds. The ten commandments consequently are introduced by a solemn declaration of who the Law-Giver is, of what He is to His people and of what He has done for them. The declaration is so made as to indicate His right to give laws, and our obligation to keep them.

The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, *I am the Lord thy God.* Every word here is precious as only the words of God can be. They present Him as a personal God, who is capable of loving us and being loved by us, and with whom fellowship is possible. The term 'Lord' stands for the 'Jehovah' of the Old Testament. That is the name under which God made Himself known to Moses, and with the proclamation of which He began His redeeming work in Israel's behalf. It is not easy to say what is the precise import of this Divine name. It has been taken to express His self-existence, His eternity, and that may be the meaning of the revelation which He made of Himself as *I AM THAT I AM* to Moses in Horeb (Exod. iii. 13, 14).

But it is the self-existence, the eternity of One who does not remain apart from His people, but enters into living relations with them, and acts on their behalf. So it is the name of the Covenant God. 'Jehovah' is the **Eternal**, the changeless One, on whom His people can surely rely. The term 'God' itself is His first and most comprehensive name, expressing his pure Deity and absolute power, designating Him as Almighty Creator, Ruler, Guide. But the term 'thy God' means that He makes Himself ours, and claims us for His own, that He puts His might at the service of His people and requires their obedience. **Which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage:** the preface speaks not only of His names but of His deeds. In declaring what He has done for His people, it designates Him as not only Creator, Ruler, Guide, Covenant God, but also Redeemer. It is expressed in terms of what He did for the people to whom the Decalogue was immediately given. But the God who redeemed Israel out of Egyptian bondage through Moses, redeems us from the greater bondage of sin through Jesus Christ; and the larger redemption makes a still larger claim for obedience to all that proceeds from His mouth.

QUESTION 44. *WHAT doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?*

Answer. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us, That because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.^a

^a Luke i. 74. That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear. V. 75. In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. I Pet. i. 15. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. V. 16. Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. V. 17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass

the time of your sojourning here in fear. V. 18. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers. V. 19. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

The commandments were given originally as the basis of the covenant into which Jehovah entered with Israel (Exod. xxxiv. 27, 28; Deut. iv. 13). The words with which they were introduced set before Israel the reasons for the obedience which was required. They have, therefore, a peculiar weight of meaning, and make a solemn appeal to conscience. The present question explains the force of this.

The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us, **That because God is the Lord** : the fact that God is 'Jehovah,' the Lord who enters into covenant with His people, is the first reason for obedience. **And our God** : a second is found in the fact that He comes into personal fellowship with us, claiming us for His own, and giving us a possession in Himself. **And Redeemer** : a third in the fact that He has done a great deed of grace by which He is become our Saviour. This sublime title of grace, *Redeemer*, is given to Jehovah occasionally in the Psalms (xix. 14; lxxviii. 35) and elsewhere, but particularly in Isaiah (*e.g.*, xli. 14; xliii. 14; xlv. 6, &c.). It is the highest teaching of the prophets of the Old Testament that Jehovah Himself is to be the Redeemer of Zion. The New Testament takes us into the final meaning of the title, when it shows us how through Christ Jehovah redeems us from every evil, from the curse of the law (Gal. iii. 13), the bondage of the law (Gal. iv. 5), the power of sin (Rom. vi. 18), a 'vain conversation' or empty life (1 Pet. i. 18, 19), all iniquity (Tit. ii. 14), and all that is meant by 'this present evil world' (Gal. i. 4). **Therefore we are bound to keep all His commandments** : each of the names by which God thus calls Himself is a distinct

reason, and each in the series is a higher and stronger reason than the one before it for obedience to all that He requires. So this Preface is the foundation for all that follows, stating the ground of our obligation to keep these commandments, and the great motives for so doing.

QUESTION 45. *WHICH is the first commandment?*

Answer. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.^a

^a Exod. xx. 3.

The precept with which the Decalogue opens is the greatest as well as the first. It lays the broad foundation of religion, and in so doing it also provides a basis for morality ; for the essence of all real religion is the worship of one God, and the security of morality is religion.

The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before Me : this declares that there is but one God for us to worship ; that this is the God who made Himself known to Israel, and through that nation to men generally ; and that there is no other to be named or honoured by us in any degree along with Him. In claiming all our worship for the one God, it condemns *polytheism*, or the service of many gods, which was the common form of religion in heathenism. That also was the sin into which the people of Israel were themselves ever prone to fall back until they were purged of it in their exile in Babylon.

QUESTION 46. *WHAT is required in the first commandment ?*

Answer. The first commandment requireth us

to know ^a and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; ^b and to worship and glorify him accordingly. ^c

^a 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

^b Deut. xxvi. 17. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice.

^c Matt. iv. 10. Then saith Jesus unto him, get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Ps. xxix. 2. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

The commandments, with the exception of the fourth and fifth, take entirely the negative form of prohibitions. But while they concern themselves chiefly with things which are not to be done, they also imply things that are to be done. So the Catechism unfolds the meaning of each precept by stating first the positive duties which it involves and then the evils which it condemns.

The first commandment requireth us, or lays it upon us as a distinct obligation, to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God: as God has revealed Himself we are not at liberty to remain ignorant of Him. He gives us the means of knowing Him in the works of Nature, in our own constitution, and, above all, in His Word and in Christ, who is 'the image of the invisible God' (Col. i. 15), 'the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person' (Heb. i. 3). We are under obligation to use these means, so that we may apprehend Him truly and worship him intelligently. Nor are we merely to recognise Him secretly, or in our own hearts, but we are to 'acknowledge' Him by openly confessing Him and practically honouring Him. Such was the demand made upon the people by Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings xviii. 21). We

are to seek this knowledge, and make this acknowledgment in two ways, namely, by recognising and confessing that this God of revelation is the 'only true God,' and by thankfully owning and taking Him to be 'our God.' What we see God to be, that we must heartily take Him to be to ourselves—so that our worship shall be personal and practical as well as intelligent. Nor is our duty exhausted even by this. We are also to worship: this word 'worship' is connected with the word 'worth' and means to 'count worthy.' To worship God therefore is to reverence Him with supreme respect in our hearts, and to express this in religious exercises appropriate to His Divine majesty and claims. **And glorify Him:** that is, to accord Him highest honour in thought and word and deed. So says the Psalmist: 'Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him all ye the seed of Israel' (Ps. xxii. 23). **Accordingly:** by which it is meant that the worship and honour offered to Him are to be such as our knowledge, and acknowledgment of Him, prompt and demand—such, therefore, as are due to One who is recognised and confessed to be the only 'true God, and our God.'

QUESTION 47. *WHAT is forbidden in the first commandment?*

Answer. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying,^a or not worshipping and glorifying the true God as God,^b and our God;^c and the

^a Ps. xiv. 1. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt; they have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good.

^b Rom. i. 21. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

^c Ps. lxxxii. 10. I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. V. 11. But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.

giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.^d

^d Rom. i. 25. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. V. 26. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections; for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.

This question shows how broad this first and fundamental commandment is, how it touches the essence of all religion, and in how many ways it is apt to be broken. **The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God as God, and our God :** it forbids, in the first place, all *atheism*, whether in thought or in practice; that is to say, it is directed against the doctrine that there is no God, against the denial that the God who is presented to us in Revelation is true God, and against the heart's refusal to own this God as the God whom we are to serve. It makes it a sin to *withhold* from this God the worship and glory which belong to Him who is at once the true God and our God. **And the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to Him alone :** if the sin of omission, the sin of *withholding* worship and glory from the true God, is a grievous breach of this commandment, the sin of commission, the sin of diverting to others what is due to Him alone, is a still more grievous offence. This is directed against all forms of false worship; against the sin in which the old heathen world which encircled Israel was sunk, the sin of honouring strange gods who were no gods; and against the sin of dividing worship between the true God and false gods. This latter was the sin that specially beset Israel. This, too, was the sin of the colonists of Samaria, of whom it is written that 'they feared the Lord and served their own gods' (2 Kings xvii. 28-41). But it is directed no less against the Roman Catholic practices of invok-

ing saints and angels, paying divine honours to the Virgin Mary, and the like, as well as against all the puzzling and entangling distinctions between different kinds of worship, by which the Church of Rome endeavours to justify herself in this. The worship of false gods being usually associated with idol-worship, this commandment is also directed against all *idolatry*, so far as that means the honouring as God that which is not God.

QUESTION 48. *WHAT* are we specially taught by these words [before me] in the first commandment?

Answer. These words [before me] in the first commandment teach us, That God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.^a

^a Ezek. viii. 5. Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry. V. 6. He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? Even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? But turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations, &c., *to the end of the chapter.*

These words [before me] in the first commandment teach us: the phrase itself in the original means rather 'in addition to me,' 'beside me,' and conveys the idea of putting God in the background, or preferring others to Him. In the Catechism it has a sense which is given it in one of the ancient versions of the Old Testament—the sense of 'in my presence,' or 'in my sight.' Thus it is taken to point to the knowledge which God, the Omnipresent and Omniscient One, cannot but have of men's idolatries, and the offence which these must be to Him. **That God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.** There is a climax here. We are led on from the

thought of the omniscience of God to that of the inspection to which He subjects all that He sees, and, again, to that of the feeling with which He regards all, or the judgment He pronounces on all. None of our idolatries, whether in thought or in deed, can be hid from the sight of God, none can escape His searching notice, none can be viewed by Him with anything short of His great and just displeasure. In these three considerations we have three arguments of increasing force for the careful observance of this commandment.

QUESTION 49. *WHICH is the second commandment?*

Answer. The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.^a

^a Exodus xx. 4, 5, 6.

The second commandment is directed against idolatry, but in a different sense from the first. The first forbids the idolatry which sets up images of strange gods for divine honours. The second forbids the idolatry which employs images in the service of the one true God. The first looks to the unity of God, and condemns the worship of more gods than one. The second looks to the invisibility and spirituality of God, and condemns the use of all

forms of worship which are inconsistent therewith. The first puts a fence round the sovereign and exclusive claims of the one God. The second puts a fence round the modes of His worship. The two together repudiate the two essential marks of heathenism, namely, the tendency to divide Deity into a number of gods, and the tendency to represent Deity under visible forms. The principle of this second commandment is that the true God is incapable of being conceived of or represented under a visible form. The highest interpretation of it is given by our Lord when He says to the woman of Samaria, 'God is a spirit' (or *God is spirit*), 'and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth' (John iv. 24).

The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image : the term 'graven image' is large enough to include images of all sorts, whether of stone, or wood, or metal. **Or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath :** heathen nations worshipped unseen Deity under the visible forms of created things, sun, moon, stars, birds, fishes, reptiles, and beasts of various kinds, the cow, the ox, the bull, and others. Their contact with Egypt, with Moab, and with other idolatrous people, brought Israel under the evil spell of these practices. This clause in the commandment is broad enough to include the adoration of any visible object from whatever section of the material creation it may be taken, as well as that of any work of man's own hand. In Deut. iv. 16-19 we have a detailed explanation of what is meant by this clause, where also a reason for it is found in the fact that when the Lord spake to Israel in Horeb, they 'saw no manner of similitude' of the Divine Being. **Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them :** it has been held by some that this commandment puts the ban upon all painting and sculpture. The present clause shows that this is wrong ; for it means that

the foregoing prohibition deals simply with what concerns worship. It makes it unlawful to use images, as is done in the Roman Catholic Church, or sacred pictures, as is done in the Greek Church, so far as men are led to 'bow down' to these things and 'worship' them. But it does not make the ordinary cultivation of the arts of the painter and the sculptor an unlawful thing. Art was employed in the furnishing of the Tabernacle itself—in the figures of the Cherubim, the fruits and flowers of the Candlestick, and other things. It was still more lavishly employed in the rich carvings and varied adornments of the Temple (1 Kings vi. 14 to vii. 51). **For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God:** the Bible often ascribes *jealousy* to God, and does so without fear of misunderstanding. See in the Old Testament such passages as Deut. iv. 24, Josh. xxiv. 19, Psalm lxxviii. 58, and, in the New Testament, Rom. xi. 11, 1 Cor. x. 22. It means that God is not an indifferent or apathetic God, but a God of love. His 'jealousy' is the fire of His love. It is the might of a love which claims our love as entirely His own, is wounded by the loss of it, and strives to recover it. The reason why He is so careful of what we worship, and how we worship, is that the majesty of His love cannot bear that our homage and affection should be turned aside to objects beneath Himself **Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me:** another difference appears here between the second commandment and the first. The latter stands in absolute directness and simplicity, having neither a penalty nor a promise attached to it. The former is accompanied by a solemn announcement of what God is and how He acts, which has all the force both of a penalty and a promise enforcing obedience. This clause declares that men's sins against God's law shall be punished not only in the offenders themselves but in their children and their children's children. That

such a penalty is in force is all too certain. We cannot be blind to the fact that one generation is made heir to the results of the vices and follies of another. In numberless cases all around us we see how the consequences of the sins of the parents descend to the children, even to the innocent children, in poverty, disease, and inherited habits of evil. We cannot read the full mystery of this. We are unfit to pronounce upon its justice and wisdom. But we can recognise a reason for the reign of this dread law of life in the unity of mankind, in the fact that God has made us not so many separate individuals, but a race in which the members are vitally connected with each other, and with a common head. There is also another side to this, which should not be forgotten. For by reason of the same law one generation reaps the harvest of good which another has sown, and the wisdom and virtue of the fathers descend to the children in inherited strength of character and constitution, and in many benefits. **And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments:** if disobedience brings penalty, obedience brings reward, and the reward is as much greater than the penalty as God's mercy is greater than His wrath. The Revised Version of the Bible notices that these words, as they stand in Exodus, may mean rather unto 'a thousand generations.' The Lord's chastisements of His haters, which descend to the third or fourth generation, have yet their measure; His blessing upon His servants, which extends to the thousandth generation, is limitless. The abounding grace of God is expressed in the same way in Deut. vii. 9, 10. This assertion of the judgment and the mercy of God is made a second time and in still richer terms in connection with the renewal of the law, when a second and larger revelation of the Divine name was made to Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; and compare Exod. iii. 14).

QUESTION 50. *WHAT is required in the second commandment?*

Answer. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing,^a and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.^b

^a Deut. xxxii. 46. And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. Matt. xxviii. 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

^b Acts ii. 42. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

From what men's religious practices have been we see how great the need is of direction. He who claims our worship has not left us without instruction as to the modes of that worship.

The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances: this question does not name the things which belong to acceptable worship. It confines itself to stating the principle which should regulate us. The principle is that God is to be worshipped, not according to our ideas, but according to what He appoints. All the religious services and all the 'ordinances' (*i.e.*, things *ordained* or *ordered*, and so *rites*) which have His authority, are to be 'received' as binding; they are to be 'observed' or attended to; and further, they are to be kept 'pure and entire,' so that we shall neither add anything to them of our own, nor take anything from them. As God hath appointed in His word: the Scriptures, therefore, are the Divine directory of worship. The New Testament shows us the ordinances which are appropriate to Christian worship. What these are is explained afterwards in Question 88.

QUESTION 51. *WHAT is forbidden in the second commandment?*

Answer. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images,^a or any other way not appointed in his word.^b

^a Deut. iv. 15. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire). V. 16. Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female. V. 17. The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air. V. 18. The likeness of anything that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth. V. 19. And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.

^b Exod. xxxii. 5. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord. V. 8. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

^c Deut. xii. 31. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God; for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. V. 32. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images: the Old Testament speaks of the sin of Ahab as greater than that of any other king of Israel (1 Kings xvi. 33). That was the sin of worshipping the strange god, Baal—a breach of the first commandment. But it speaks also of the sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, ‘wherewith he made Israel to sin’ (1 Kings xvi. 26). That was the sin of setting up the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, not as images of strange gods, but as symbols of the true God. The ministry of prophets such as Amos and Hosea was largely concerned with this sin. The craving for some visible symbol or representation of God had a strong grasp of the mind of

Israel. It exhibited itself even on the occasion of the giving of the Law, when Aaron himself yielded, and the molten calf was made as a figure of the God who had brought them out of Egypt (Exod. xxxii. 1-6). The same craving has led to many corrupt practices in the Christian Church. **Or in any other way not appointed in His word:** not merely are those grosser forms of image-worship and picture-worship forbidden, which receive licence in the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches, but all modes and means of will-worship. Among these must be reckoned the gorgeous ceremonial, the sensuous rites, the elaborate celebrations of the Sacraments, and many other practices in which the Romish Church and other Churches have departed from the simplicity of the New Testament. So contrary to these things, indeed, is this commandment, that Roman Catholic teachers are apt to pass it lightly by or omit it when they bring the Decalogue before their people. The Scriptures, it is true, do not prescribe in actual terms everything which is to be done and everything which is to be left undone in religious worship. But in letter or in spirit they give the direction which we need and by which we are to be bound.

QUESTION 52. *WHAT are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?*

Answer. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us,^a his propriety in us,^b and the zeal he hath to his own worship.^c

^a Ps. xcvi. 2. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. V. 3. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. V. 6. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

^b Ps. xlv. 11. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.

^c Exod. xxxiv. 13. But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves. V. 14. For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

The authority of the commandment should be enough to secure obedience to it. Yet mindful of our weakness, God is pleased to accompany this one and the following three with considerations which serve further to persuade us to obedience.

The reasons annexed, or added, to the **second commandment** are, **God's sovereignty over us**: three things are shown to be added to the bare statement of the law itself. These things explain why God gives this law, and act along with its own authority as inducements to us to keep it. The first is our dependence. We are not our own masters, but God's subjects, and under allegiance to Him. The Scriptures are full of this great idea of the sovereignty of God. How naturally does the title 'king' come to the lips of the Old Testament saints as they cry to God in the deep devotion of the Psalms. See Psalm v. 2; xx. 9; xlv. 4, &c. Notice also in the New Testament such words as these of Paul in 1 Tim. i. 17; vi. 15. The second is **His propriety in us**: this word 'propriety' comes from a Latin adjective which means 'one's own.' It is an older and somewhat stronger word than the familiar term 'property.' It denotes 'exclusive right of possession.' As our Maker, God has such absolute ownership in us, and is entitled to our obedience. He has a second title to ownership in us in that He is our Redeemer; which is expressed by Paul when he says, 'and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body' (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, R.V.). The third is **the zeal He hath to His own worship**: 'zeal,' a term taken from a Greek root meaning to *boil*, signifies 'intense interest.' God has such an interest in His worship that He will not view with indifference anything that is unworthy of it. On this zeal, see such passages as 2 Kings xix. 31; Isaiah ix. 7. He expects us to have a like zeal for His worship. So was it with the Psalmist, whose concern for the sanctuary

was such that he could say, 'the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up' (Psalm lxix. 9). John's gospel (ch. ii. 17) applies the Psalmist's words to Christ Himself, and finds in the purging of the temple an instance of the perfect zeal which the Son had to the Father's house and worship.

QUESTION 53. *WHICH is the third commandment?*

Answer. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.^a

^a Exod. xx. 7.

The first commandment claims that God shall have no rival in our worship; the second, that our worship shall be in forms worthy of Himself. The third now takes a larger sweep, and claims that in Himself and in everything by which He is known, He shall be held in reverence.

The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: the first commandment states what results from the fact that God is One; the second states what results from the fact that God is spiritual; the third now states what results from the fact that God is not unknown. He is invisible, and neither assumes nor allows any visible representation of Himself. Nevertheless He has a Name, and that Name is to be held sacred from all misuse or levity. A 'name' is meant to distinguish one object from another. One effect of the march of civilisation has been to strip the names of persons of their significance. But there was a time when they had a real and obvious meaning. They expressed something which was felt to mark off those to whom they were given from others—something peculiar in birth,

character, circumstance, fortune, or deed. The more ancient Bible names, such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, &c., were given with such a purpose. So the *Name* of God in Scripture means that by which He is distinguished, and includes all that by which He makes known to men what He is in Himself and what He is to them. In like manner 'the name of Christ' means all that makes Christ known to men for what He really is, and to 'believe in His name' is to believe in all that He is revealed to be in dignity and in saving power. The terms 'vain,' 'vanity,' and 'in vain' are familiar in the Bible. Sometimes they have much the same sense as *false* or *lying* (Psalm xii. 2). At other times they denote what is *sinful* (Is. v. 18). Yet again they signify what is *needless* or *useless* (Psalm cxxvii. 1; Mal. iii. 14). The phrase 'take God's name in vain, as found in the commandment, is not to be limited to false swearing or lying in God's name, but covers everything that is profane, dishonouring, uncalled for, or light-minded, in the use of the Divine Name. For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain: this commandment is sustained, as is the case with the second, by something more than its mere authority. But while in the second we have what amounts to the double sanction of a threat and a promise, in the third we have only the threat. The word 'guilt' is connected with an old Saxon term meaning to *pay* or *requite*. So it comes to denote both *criminality* and *liability to punishment*. An explicit announcement of the guilt attaching to a breach of God's law, and consequently of the penalty that will follow it, is in place here. For beyond most sins the sin which is dealt with here is one which men are tempted to think lightly of.

QUESTION 54. *WHAT is required in the third commandment?*

Answer. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names,^a titles,^b attributes,^c ordinances,^d word,^e and works.^f

^a Matt. vi. 9. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Deut. xxviii. 58. If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD.

^b Ps. lxxviii. 4. Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoyce before him.

^c Rev. xv. 3. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. V. 4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee: for thy judgments are made manifest.

^d Mal. i. 11. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. V. 14. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.

^e Ps. cxxxviii. 1. I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise to thee. V. 2. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

^f Job xxxvi. 24. Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.

This commandment is occupied with the very subject to which also the first petition of the Lord's Prayer is consecrated. It is a precept of great breadth, nor is it less deep and penetrating than it is broad. How far-reaching it is the careful enumeration given in this Question is intended to show.

The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use: 'reverent' comes from a Latin word meaning to 'fear' or 'stand in awe of.' The *fear* of God is one of the ruling ideas of the Old Testament, so much so, indeed, that it becomes a title of God Himself. So we read of 'the fear of Isaac' (Gen.

xxxi. 42), God being the object of Isaac's reverence. It is used sometimes as an expression for the worship of God, the law of God, or the word of God (Ps. xxxiv. 11 ; xix. 9). It is commended as 'the beginning of wisdom' (Ps. cxi. 10 ; Prov. i. 7), as the safeguard against sin (Ps. iv. 4), as the secret of blessedness (Ps. xxv. 12-14 ; xxxiv. 9). In the New Testament, too, it appears as the spirit in which our holiness is to be perfected (2 Cor. vii. 1), and our whole life here spent (1 Pet. i. 17). But it is specially connected with the keeping of God's commandments (Eccles. xii. 13) ; in which connection it occurs so often in Deuteronomy (vi. 24 ; viii. 6 ; x. 12, &c.). These two terms *holy* and *reverend* occur together (Ps. cxi. 9). They express the spirit in which God and the things of God are to be regarded. In all things and by all men He is to be 'had in reverence' (Ps. lxxxix. 7), and to be served with reverence (Heb. xii. 28).

Of God's Names: six things are now mentioned as involved in the requirements of this commandment. The 'names' of God are the first noticed, by which the Catechism means here the *personal* names or designations of God. Instead of using one constant well understood term, the Bible employs a variety of terms by which to designate God. He is so incomparably great in his being, and rich in his character, that we need all these different names to help us to some idea of what He is. It is only by degrees that He has revealed Himself to men, and each of His great names marks a stage in that gradual revelation, and sums up what He gave men to know of Him at the time. So, for example, in the oldest stage of revelation, His name is *God* or *Almighty* ; to Moses He revealed Himself in a higher degree under the special name of *Jehovah* ; through Christ He is at last made known to us in all that is suggested by the supreme name of *Father*.

Titles: descriptive terms, expressing what He is in prerogative or in character. These are still more numerous and varied

than the 'names.' Creator, Preserver, King of Kings, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God of Salvation, God of Grace, God of Hope, God of Patience, God of Truth, God of all Comfort, Father of Mercies, Father of Lights, Jehovah-Rophi, Jehovah-Nissi—these are but some out of many. **Attributes**: a term taken from a Latin word meaning to *ascribe* to one, and used to denote the qualities or characteristics of the Divine Nature. These 'attributes' are mentioned in Question 4. **Ordinances**: things ordained or appointed by Him for use in the Church, in the home, or in society—such as prayer, praise, the preaching of the Word, the Sacraments, the Christian ministry, civil magistracy, &c. Some of these are afterwards dealt with in Question 88. **Word**: here apparently the written word of Scripture, which comes by His inspiration and with His authority, revealing His will, and recording His acts. **And works**: all that we see of His doing in creation, in providence, or in redemption.

QUESTION 55. *WHAT is forbidden in the third commandment?*

Answer. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of any thing whereby God maketh himself known.^a

^a Mal. i. 6. A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? V. 7. Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. V. 12. But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Mal. ii. 2. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Mal. iii. 14. Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?

The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning : the word 'profane' comes from a Latin term meaning *forth from the fane or temple, not sacred, common, secular, and then irreverent*. To 'profane,' therefore, is to treat with irreverence, impiety, or contempt. Or abusing of anything whereby God maketh Himself known : the commandment is thus explained to have a very wide scope. It pronounces against all *blasphemy*, by which is meant speaking injuriously of God ; against all *profane swearing* and cursing, but also against the light and thoughtless use of the name of God in common speech ; against everything contemptuous or frivolous in handling the ordinances of God, scoffing at things sacred, misusing or dishonouring God's House, God's Day, or God's Word. It is obviously directed also against all perjury, that is to say, the use of God's name in support of a lie. But it does not prohibit every kind of oath or appeal to God's name. Some indeed affirm that an oath is not to be taken in any circumstances, and they claim authority for this position not only from this commandment, but from our Lord's declaration in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 33-37). But when our Lord says, 'Swear not at all,' He speaks particularly of the perversion of the commandment by the Jews of His day, who held that it forbade only false swearing, or swearing by strange gods, and allowed themselves a fatal license of swearing on all manner of occasions in ordinary talk. Our Lord Himself did not refuse to be put upon His oath by the High Priest (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64) ; neither did Paul hesitate to call God to witness that what he said was true (2 Cor. i. 23). As the sixth commandment forbids not all, but only certain kinds of killing, so this one forbids not all, but certain kinds of swearing. The Bible recognises that the taking of an oath may be right and necessary (Deut. vi. 13), and even speaks of God as swearing by Himself and confirming His promise by an oath (Heb. vi. 13).

An oath has the character of an act of worship in so far as it is a solemn appeal to God, a solemn confession of His presence and authority. To call upon God, the King of truth, the Searcher of hearts, and the Judge of all, as witness of what we affirm or undertake, may be appropriate in certain transactions, *e.g.*, in taking the responsibilities of public office. It is specially fitting that the giving of evidence in courts of justice, where the life, liberty, or good name of others may depend on the perfect truth of our statements, should have this kind of solemnity and security. The same principle applies to the subject of *vows*. A vow takes also the character of an act of worship, in so far as it means the consecration of something to God. As the oath is an appeal to God, the vow is a promise or engagement made to Him. As little as the former is the latter to be taken lightly. The vow may easily be assumed in ways inconsistent with Christian liberty and duty, under conditions or with objects that cannot be acceptable to God. It has been abused and made the source of gross corruptions, especially in the monastic system of the Church of Rome. But it is not in itself unlawful. In the stories of Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 20-22), Hannah (1 Sam. i. 11), and others, as well as in many of the Psalms (xxii. 25; cxvi. 14, &c.), we have Biblical instances of the vow. The Old Testament states the ways in which vows were to be taken and observed under the Mosaic dispensation (Deut. xxiii. 21-23; Numb. xxx. 2-5, &c.). The New Testament gives no positive teaching on the subject. It requires the consecration of ourselves to God, and makes little or no account of the vow in the limited sense of a solemn engagement to consecrate some particular thing. Yet in the New Testament ordinance of baptism we have something of the nature of a vow.

QUESTION 56. *WHAT is the reason annexed to the third commandment?*

Answer. The reason annexed to the third commandment is, That however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.^a

^a 1 Sam. ii. 12. Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord. V. 17. Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord; for men abhorred the offering of the Lord. V. 22. Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. V. 29. Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice, and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? 1 Sam. iii. 13. For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. Deut. xxviii. 58. If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD. V. 59. Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

The question shows how this commandment has our own fears enlisted on its side. God has planted the instinct of fear in our minds as a powerful help, though not the highest, to virtue. He who knows best what our nature is, and adapts His action to it as it is, does not forbear to use this instinct as a deterrent from sin. So this commandment expresses its claim upon our observance by pointing to a penalty, and calling in the assistance of fear.

The reason annexed to the third commandment is, That however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men: nations have fixed their own penalties for the violation of this commandment, punishing blasphemy, perjury, and other offences by fines, imprisonment, and the like. It is not within the compass of human magistracy, how-

ever, to punish all breaches of this law ; neither is it within the power of any human authority to detect all offenders. Much may pass undiscovered and unpunished of men. Nevertheless, there is no real impunity. **Yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape His righteous judgment :** under the Mosaic dispensation there were severe penalties for offences against this law. Blasphemy, for example, was punished with death by stoning, as in the case of Shelomith's son (Lev. xxiv. 10-16). The New Testament prescribes no such penalties as are found in the Old. Yet there is a retribution which no breach of this law, secret or open, can escape. There is a righteous judgment of God at work in the world now, which makes a man reap as he sows (Gal. vi. 7). And there is a supreme tribunal at which all sins shall at last be made open, and visited with their just award. To this the Old Testament and the New, yet each in its own degree, both bear witness (Eccles. xii. 14 ; Rom. ii. 2-5 ; Heb. xii. 25-27).

QUESTION 57. *WHICH is the fourth commandment ?*

Answer. The fourth commandment is, Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work ; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God : in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates : for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.^a

^a Exod. xx. 8-11.

Thus far the commandments have taken the negative form—*Thou shalt not*. The great commandment which we now reach, however, opens with the positive charge—*Remember*. It is given in one edition, in Exod. xx. 8-11, and in another in Deut. v. 12-15. These are essentially the same. Yet they have certain differences, which deserve notice. The re-statement in Deuteronomy begins with the word ‘keep’ instead of ‘remember.’ It adds the clause ‘as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee’ to the first sentence of the commandment as we find it in Exodus. It gives a more particular expression of the interest both of the brute creation and of servants in the benefits of the law, by introducing the clauses ‘nor thine ox, nor thine ass,’ and ‘that thy manservant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.’ It also refers to a different event as a reason for observing this law—viz., the Divine redemption from Egypt, instead of the rest of God after the creation. As it is the edition in Deuteronomy that declares more definitely that the purpose of the commandment was to secure rest for the servant as well as the master, so it fitly recalls the fact that the whole nation was once a nation of slaves. The commandment has this great idea in it—that our time is not our own, but a thing to be consecrated to God. The institution which it erects is beneficent in its intention, securing a right of rest to all classes in the community of Israel and even to animals. It is also a standing witness to the relations between the God of Creation and Redemption and His people. Hence it is declared to be a *sign* between Jehovah and Israel (Exod. xxxi. 13, 17; Ezek. xx. 12, 20). God’s gift of the Sabbath was one of the chief distinctions of Israel. The observance of the Sabbath was a chief secret of the greatness of Israel. “They were to be distinguished as the Sabbath-keeping people among all the nations of the earth, and as such were to be the recipients of God’s special blessings” (Hodge).

The fourth commandment is, Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy: the term 'remember' does not necessarily refer to the past. As appears from the corresponding term 'keep' in Deut. v. 12, it may mean simply 'be mindful' or 'be careful' of the Sabbath day, 'attend to it' as something apt to be neglected. It is one of the clearest, saddest proofs of the wandering of our hearts from God that we need to be reminded of an institution which is so certainly God's gift to us for our good. The day takes its name from a Hebrew word signifying *rest*. The name *Sabbath* is the name borne by the Divine Day of Rest all through the Old Testament. In the Christian dispensation the Day of Rest receives the title of *The Lord's Day*, because it commemorates the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The name *Sunday* is not a Biblical name, but is originally a pagan term denoting the day that was dedicated to the sun and its worship among our heathen forefathers. The phrase 'to keep it holy' or 'to sanctify it,' as it is rendered in Deut. v. 12, means properly to *set it apart*. It indicates the *separation* of this day from the common uses of the other days of the week. So the law of the Sabbath was one of many things which marked out Israel as an elect and peculiar people, dedicated to a high and singular service. "It was in harmony," says a recent writer, "with the whole system of Judaism, and was a most characteristic expression of one of the great ideas of which Judaism was the development. A nation was 'set apart' from all other nations, was invested with special prerogatives, and entrusted with special duties; within that elect nation itself a tribe—the tribe of Levi—was 'set apart' from all the other tribes and similarly distinguished; in that sacred tribe a priestly family—the family of Aaron—was set apart from all other families; in that family of priests an individual—the High Priest

—was set apart from all other priests, and in him this idea of personal consecration to God was represented in its highest form. A sacred building—the Temple—was ‘set apart’ from all other buildings as being God’s dwelling-place; the inner court was ‘set apart’ from the rest of the Temple as being especially God’s house; and in that inner court the Holy of Holies was ‘set apart’ from the Holy place itself as the very chamber of the Divine Presence.”

Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: the Divine idea of man’s life, therefore, was neither a life of idleness nor a life of drudgery. It was to be a life of honest labour, but neither a life altogether of toil, nor a life altogether common and secular. One recurring day was to be a day for rest and for God, and a recognition of His claims upon our time. This day was to be the seventh, not merely a seventh part of our week, but the seventh in the order of days. It was not left to the Israelite to select his own day, neither would the commandment have been kept by resting on any other day than the last of the week. As the seventh day had this sacred character among the days, so the seventh month had a peculiar position among the months. That month began with the Feast of Trumpets, and included the Day of Atonement, and also the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering which made a Sabbatic week, and was the most joyous of all the Jewish festivals (Lev. xxiii. 39-41). But the seventh year among the years was more closely akin to the seventh day among the days. That year was the Sabbatical year, a year of rest for the soil, of special provision for the poor and for animals, and of remission of debts (Exod. xxiii. 10, 11; Deut. xv. 1-3). And the seventh of such Sabbatical years was followed by the year of Jubilee (that year being inaugurated indeed by the Day of Atonement in the Sabbatical year). which again brought rest to the soil, the return of

landed property which had passed out of the hands of the family, and freedom for the slave (Lev. xxv. 11, 12, 13-34, 39-54). In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: release from the common round of toil, with its grinding weariness, its possibilities of oppression, its tendency to harden and lower life and to shut out the thought of things Divine, was the great provision enforced by this law. Its merciful character is seen in the enumeration of these different subjects—son, daughter, &c. It does not pause to specify all the various kinds of work which it forbids. It leaves the Israelite to learn its application otherwise. But it does pause to mention by name different classes meant to be protected by it, lest any should be made to come short of it. The ‘stranger within thy gates,’ *i.e.*, the stranger within thy camp or town, denotes men and women of other nations who had become resident in Israel. These formed a large body, drawn from several sources—from the ‘mixed multitude’ that came with Israel out of Egypt (Exod. xii. 38), the old native population, captives taken in war, fugitives, hired servants, and traders. In Solomon’s time the census showed there were no less than 153,600 males of this class (2 Chron. ii. 17). So the Sabbath law, if it enforced duties, also secured rights, and gave these rights not only to one’s children, but to the slave, the man of foreign race, and the dumb domestic cattle. In the laws of all ancient nations was there any precept to match this? For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day and hallowed it: the Sabbath was thus made a memorial of creation, and a witness to the being of a Divine Creator. The Divine rest and the Divine regard for the day were at once the motive and the model proposed to Israel. According

to the Book of Genesis, God gave a sacred character to that day by continuing His work through six creative days and ceasing from it on the seventh. His people, therefore, were to recognise it to be a day consecrated and set apart from others.

QUESTION 58. *WHAT is required in the fourth commandment?*

Answer. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy sabbath to himself.^a

^a Deut. v. 12. Keep the sabbath-day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. V. 13. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work. V. 14. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.

The Sabbath-law is repeated and solemnly enforced in numerous passages of the Books of Moses. The Prophets likewise dwell largely on its Divine authority and its high requirements. So sacred an importance was attached to it in the Mosaic Law that death was made the penalty for its violation. See such passages as Exod. xxiii. 12; xxxi. 13-15; xxxv. 2; Ezek. xx. 20, 21; xlv. 24.

The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as He hath appointed in His word: the Catechism recognises in the Sabbath-law a principle of general application. Under the Mosaic dispensation there were various times set apart by Divine appointment for religious service. These festivals and holy convocations, which formed an important part of the religious system of the Old Testament, have not

been continued under the New Testament. But the people of God under the ancient dispensation were under obligation to keep these sacred, and the Mosaic Law has much to say of them. See in especial Lev. xxiii. Expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to Himself: the Sabbath was a 'set time' in a more definite and sacred sense than any other. The Catechism takes the principle involved in its institution to be that of the express and entire consecration of a seventh part of our time to God.

QUESTION 59. *WHICH day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly sabbath?*

Answer. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly sabbath;^a and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian sabbath.^b

^a Gen. ii. 2. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. V. 3. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

^b 1 Cor. xvi. 1. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. V. 2. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. Acts xx. 7. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

It was not merely a certain fixed proportion of time, but one particular day, that was prescribed by the Fourth Commandment. If an Israelite had varied the day according to his preference or his circumstances, he would have been guilty of a presumptuous offence against the law

From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly sabbath: from the date of the delivery of the Law from Mount Sinai the seventh day was recognised as the Sabbath of the Lord on to our Saviour's time. The Scriptures bear clear witness to its continuance into New Testament times. Previous to the great enactment of Mount Sinai we find it mentioned in connection with the gathering of the manna (Exod. xvi. 23, 25, 26). No mention is made of it in the history of the Patriarchal age which is given in the book of Genesis, although the weekly division of time is noticed (Gen. xxix. 27, 28), and the period of seven days is twice mentioned in the history of Noah (Gen. viii. 10, 12). But the Catechism has in view the statement made with regard to the seventh day in the record of creation (Gen. ii. 3). It understands this statement to refer to the Sabbath, and to connect the institution with the beginning of man's history. The place which the Sabbath-law holds in the Decalogue is also taken to show it to be a primitive law and one of perpetual obligation. Inasmuch as all the other precepts in the Ten Words are of original, universal, and permanent obligation, this one is understood to be of the same rank. And the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian sabbath: if the Fourth Commandment is a moral precept, and therefore of perpetual force in the general duty which it enjoins, there are things in its Mosaic form which are positive and not moral. These are the claim of one seventh of our time instead of a sixth, an eighth, or any other proportion, and the appointment of the last day of the week as the particular day to be set apart. These things are such as are not binding upon us in their own nature. So the day to be consecrated as the Day of Rest has changed. With the resurrection of Christ the old

dispensation gave place to the new. The institutions of Mosaic times passed away, and among these the ancient seventh-day Sabbath which, along with the Passover, had been the greatest distinction of the Jewish nation. The day which made the true birthday of the Christian Church, the day on which the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit descended on the waiting disciples (Acts. ii. 1-4), has been held by many to have been the first day of the week. That, indeed, is not quite certain. But it is certain that the first day of the week was the day on which the Saviour rose from the dead (John xx. 1), and the day on which He met His disciples (John xx. 19, 26). This day which God had 'set apart' from all other days by the great event of the Resurrection, carried its sacredness in itself to the disciples of Christ. On this day they met for fellowship and worship (Acts xx. 7), and this became the Day of Rest in the Christian Church. The Christian Day of Rest differs in important respects from the Jewish. It is the memorial of a still greater event than the Jewish institution had in view, and it brings us a greater liberty. But in it the Divine idea of the Mosaic Sabbath is continued, and its highest meaning is fulfilled. Nor until 'the end of the world' will its claims upon us, or our need of it, cease.

QUESTION 60. *How is the sabbath to be sanctified?*

Answer. The sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day,^a even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days;^b and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship,^c except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.^d

a Exod. xx. 8. Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy. V. 10. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, &c. Exod. xvi. 25. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. V. 26. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. V. 27. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. V. 28. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?

b Neh. xiii. 15. In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath-day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. V. 16. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. V. 17. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath-day? V. 18. Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel, by profaning the sabbath. V. 19. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath-day. V. 21. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. V. 22. And I commanded the Levites, that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath-day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

c Luke iv. 16. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read. Acts xx. 7. And upon the first day of the week, &c. (*See under previous Question.*) Ps. xcii. [*title, A psalm or song for the sabbath-day.*] Isa. lxvi. 23. And it shall come to pass, that from one new-moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.

d Matt. xii. *from verse 1 to 31.* At that time Jesus went on the sabbath-day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. V. 2. But when the Pharisees, &c. V. 12. It is lawful to do well on the sabbath-days.

The question of what might lawfully be done on the Sabbath day, and what might not, was one of such importance that the Old Testament often pronounced upon it. The application of the general rule to particular cases was not always clear. The Old Testament helped the Israelites in this by

giving some definite examples. In this question and in the following one; the Catechism gathers up what it finds to be the teaching of Scripture on the way in which the Sabbath law was to be kept by the Israelites, and on the principles which apply to us in the observance of the Christian Day of Rest.

The sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day: the Jewish Sabbath began at sunset on the Friday, and ended at sunset on the Saturday. The whole of that space of time was to be 'sanctified' or set apart for a holy rest. So it is prescribed in express terms in Lev. xxiii. 32—'from even to even shall ye celebrate your sabbath.' **Even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days:** the terms which are used by the Fourth Commandment itself as well as in other declarations of the Old Testament, in describing the rest which is enjoined, are of the widest scope. They mean that it shall be a rest from servile toil, from ordinary business, from every kind of work (Exod. xxxi. 15). The Catechism couples 'recreations' with 'employments' here, teaching us that much that we do in the way of amusement and pleasure may be as inconsistent with the Divine purpose in the Day of Rest as servile or secular work, and interfere as seriously with the duty we owe to God then. The Divine law recognises our need of recreation, and allows it its proper place and time. But it will not have it usurp more than belongs to it, or come in the way of any obvious duty, least of all in the way of our duty to God Himself. **And spending the whole time:** if God is to be honoured by the setting apart of a portion of our time, we should regard that portion of time as entirely His. It is meant to be used as a whole in a holy and special service, and to be distinguished as a whole from other days. Our consecration of it should be undivided. The tragic

narrative in Acts v. 1-11 should help us to understand what it is to present to God a partial offering when He expects the whole. **In the public and private exercises of God's worship** : the first idea in the Fourth Commandment, as we have seen, is *rest*. It is this alone that is dwelt upon in various sections of the Mosaic legislation ; see Exod. xxiii. 12 ; xxxiv. 21. But the Sabbath was to be a Sabbath 'unto Jehovah,' 'a Sabbath of rest to the Lord,' as it is termed in Lev. xxv. 2. The rest, therefore, had also a religious meaning, and so we find the employment of it for purposes of worship stated in various passages of the Old Testament. From 2 Kings iv. 23, for example, we gather that it was the practice to go then to the 'men of God,' the prophets who expounded the Divine Law and communicated the Divine Word. We find the 92nd Psalm designated a Psalm or Song for the Sabbath day. From the New Testament we see that, at a later period, when the Synagogue was an established institution, the Jews repaired to the place of public worship for the reading of the law and the prophets, and for exhortation (Acts xiii. 14, 15, 27, 44 ; xvii. 1-3 ; xviii. 4). The Mosaic law, itself, too, provided that the seventh day should be a day of 'holy convocation,' that is to say, a day for *religious* meetings, as distinguished from meetings in which political and other matters were considered (Lev. xxiii. 3). In the Temple services the shewbread was renewed (Lev. xxiv. 8), and the daily offerings were doubled (Numb. xxviii. 9). The day itself, too, reminded the Israelite of what God had done, both in creation and in the redemption from Egypt ; and was, therefore, a call to worship Him and show forth 'the praises of the Lord and His strength, and His wonderful works which He had done.' So it was a weekly appeal to them to remember their God in public and in private. In more than one passage the duty of reverencing God's sanctuary is coupled

with that of keeping His Sabbaths (Lev. xix. 30 ; xxvi. 2). Except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy: that work of a religious nature was lawful on the Sabbath appears from the case of the shewbread just referred to, which was prepared on the Sabbath (Lev. xxiv. 7, 8 ; 1 Chron. ix. 32). The prophet Hosea enforces the great principle, 'I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offering' (ch. vi. 6). Christ Himself twice makes use of these words of the Old Testament when He speaks of the Sabbath law (Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7). So He gives us the general rule that we are at liberty to do on the Sabbath whatever mercy demands, or the life and well-being of ourselves or others require to be done. Our Lord Himself recognises this when He speaks of the priests in the Temple profaning the Sabbath and being blameless (Matt. xii. 5). The lawfulness of works of necessity and mercy on the Sabbath, even under the Mosaic dispensation, is shown by our Lord when He justified His disciples in satisfying their hunger (Matt. xii. 1-4) ; when, in defence of His own works of healing, He said to the ruler of the Synagogue, 'Doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?' (Luke xiii. 15) ; when He rebuked the lawyers and Pharisees by asking them, 'Which of you shall have an ox or an ass fallen into a pit and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?' (Luke xiv. 5). Some of His great works of healing were done on the Sabbath. It was on that day, for example, that He restored the withered hand (Mark iii. 1-4), that He loosed the woman from her infirmity (Luke xiii. 11-17), that He cured the impotent man (John v. 5-10), that He opened the eyes of one who was blind (John ix. 13, 14). Much of His teaching was directed against the unauthorised restrictions which the Pharisees had put upon the

use of the day. Christ's teaching and example should guide us in the use of our Day of Rest.

QUESTION 61. *WHAT is forbidden in the fourth commandment?*

Answer. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required,^a and the profaning the day by idleness,^b or doing that which is in itself sinful,^c or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.^d

^a Ezek. xxii. 26. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Amos viii. 5. Saying, When will the new-moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shckel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? Mal. i. 13. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts: and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord.

^b Acts xx. 7. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. V. 9. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

^c Ezek. xxiii. 38. Moreover, this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths.

^d Jer. xvii. 24. And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath-day, but hallow the sabbath-day, to do no work therein. V. 25. Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain for ever. V. 26. And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, and meat-offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the Lord. Isa. lviii. 13. If thou

turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.

The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required: the Catechism distinguishes between the positive profanation of the Day of Rest and the failure to do at all, or to do with sufficient care, the things which are proper to it. But it makes this distinction only to remind us that to leave undone what we ought to do is sinful no less than to do what we ought not. Sins of omission as well as sins of presumption are possible under this commandment as under others. We dishonour it, too, as is well said, if we fail to "employ not hands only, but heart likewise in temporal business. . . . Wandering thoughts and a wandering heart desecrate it." And the profaning the day by idleness: as God's Rest was not in action, so His people's rest is to be something other than torpor, listlessness, or sloth. Or doing that which is in itself sinful: there never can be licence for us to do what is in itself wrong, least of all on the day that is consecrated to the Great Judge and Fountain of Right Himself. Or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations: a far-reaching application of the law, and one not easy to satisfy. Yet it lies in the principle that there is a time for everything, and that the time which is set apart to God is not the time for worldly engagements of any kind. The Fourth Commandment itself is content with giving the general principle of a Sabbatic rest from servile and ordinary work. The Mosaic books present us with three special applications of the general principle. Exod. xxxv. 3 shows that the lighting of a fire was forbidden to the Jew, as Exod. xvi. 23 prescribes that the baking and cooking of food should not take place on the seventh day.

Num. xv. 32-36 indicates that the gathering of sticks was deemed a profanation worthy of death; and Exod. xvi. 29 intimates that the Israelite was not at liberty to go outside the camp, but had to abide in his place. Other passages of the Old Testament show that it was forbidden to make purchases (Neh. x. 31) or to carry burdens (Neh. xiii. 19; Jer. xvii. 21). We gather from these instances that the Law forbade marketing, trading, unnecessary travelling, and the like. Later Judaism introduced a multitude of unreasonable and entangling prohibitions which made the Sabbath a puzzle and a weariness. Our Lord condemned these and gave a new liberty to men by His great declaration, 'the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath' (Mark ii. 27, 28). He has taught us that the day was meant for our good, not that we are to be its slaves. The Old Testament itself spoke of it as a 'delight' (Isa. lviii. 13). Much more is the Christian Day of Rest, on which we are called to commemorate the resurrection of Christ and the finishing of the work of God's redeeming love, intended to be a day of joy, and not of gloom or bondage. But while under the New Testament we are set free from much that Israel was bound by under the severer discipline of the Mosaic dispensation, we are called by a yet higher law, the law of the spirit, to abstain from everything inconsistent with the great object of our Christian Day of Rest. "The essence of this Fourth Commandment," it is well said, "lies deeper than any and every difference between Jewish strictness and Christian liberty; it underlies both, and both at their best express it worthily. Only we Christians are beyond all others bound to keep in view that a vexatious, petty scrupulousness forms no part of our Sunday duty, while works of mercy are never more holy than on that day. . . . Our hallowed rest is promoted and not violated by

services of love done in the love of God to our brethren.”

QUESTION 62. *WHAT are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?*

Answer. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God’s allowing us six days of the week for our own employments,^a his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the sabbath-day.^b

^a Exod. xx. 9. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.

^b Exod. xx. 11. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

The Fourth Commandment is now shown to contain within it no less than four distinct considerations, which support it and commend it as reasonable. Each contains a weighty motive inciting us to observe it carefully and thankfully.

The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are God’s allowing us six days of the week for our own employments: the first of these four motives for the observance of the law is taken from the Divine liberality. Israel were called to avow themselves to be a people set apart to Jehovah in their time as in all other things. Recognising that, by reason of the work which was necessary for the ordinary wants of life, they could not acknowledge His claims over them by giving their whole time to His service, God in this commandment asked them to consecrate to Him at least one little portion of their time. All that He required them to give as a token of His right to their time was the surrender of their own employments in the one small section of it which closes the weekly division. If our Maker, knowing what we

are, grants us the large allowance of six days for our own lawful uses, shall we grudge the dedication of one day in return for His considerate bounty? His challenging a special propriety in the seventh: to 'challenge,' which is an old French word, means to *call* or *summon*, and so to *claim as due*, to *demand as a right*. As to the term 'propriety,' see Question 52. All our days are God's, yet this particular day is claimed by Him as peculiarly His own. So the seventh day is described in the Old Testament as Jehovah's Day—'the sabbath of the Lord' (Exod. xvi. 25; xx. 10; Lev. xxiii. 3; Deut. v. 14), 'the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord' (Exod. xxxi. 15); and in Isaiah lviii. 13 He speaks of it as 'my holy day.' His own example: the fact that God rested from His creative work on the seventh day, as stated in Gen. ii. 2, is referred to again in Exod. xxxi. 17 as a reason for the perpetual observance of the Sabbath as a sign of the covenant between God and Israel. And His blessing the sabbath day: God blessed the day by setting it apart for rest, and He made it the channel of blessings to His people. In one of the most remarkable passages of his prophecies (lviii. 13, 14) Isaiah connects the promise of the highest national prosperity with the doing of God's ways and the finding of God's pleasure instead of our own on the Sabbath day. So high is the honour put upon it that when the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the rest 'which remaineth' for the people of God, he calls that eternal heritage a *Sabbatism*, or 'Sabbath-rest,' as our Revised Version renders it (Heb. iv. 4). That the Divine blessing is upon the Day of Rest is seen in all that the institution has been to the prosperity, the physical well-being, the moral strength, and spiritual elevation of those who have honoured it. It has been the testimony of the wisest and greatest men that the well-being both of individuals and of states has been ad-

vanced by respecting the Divine Day of Rest. "God, in claiming this portion of time for Himself," it is truly said, "did so, amongst other things, in the interests of toiling men, to whom He gave it as a heritage." It is given us as a check upon the grinding selfishness of those who have their fellow-men in their power. It is given us as a protection for our bodily life and well-being. It is given us with the still higher purpose of being a safeguard for the more sacred life of our souls. Our secular occupations and the common interests of life so absorb us, that a day set apart is necessary as a defence against their encroachment on higher things. The Pilgrim Fathers laid one of the deep foundations of their future greatness when, on touching in midwinter the shores of the land that was to be their new home, they devoutly paused to celebrate their first American Sabbath. "There they stood," says one who can appreciate the meaning of their act; "there they praised God; there arose from New England's soil the first Sabbath hymn of praise, and the first united prayer of faith from child-like, patient, submissive hearts—from men in resolution and endurance, from children in faith and obedience."

QUESTION 63. *WHICH is the fifth commandment?*

Answer. The fifth commandment is, Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.^a

^a Exod. xx 12.

Among the words given by God to Moses to speak to all Israel, we find this one, 'Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the Lord your God' (Lev. xix. 3). Reverence for parents, and honour for the Sabbath,

are enjoined by the Lawgiver as if they were one duty, and the fifth commandment is thus closely connected with the fourth. Nor is this without good reason. For if the one protects the rights of men, preserves their energies, and defends religion, the other shields and hallows the home, and thereby promotes all that is best in the life of the individual, the life of society, the life of the nation, and the life of the Church. This is true at all times, and in all conditions of society. But it was pre-eminently true in the circumstances of the people to whom the law was delivered by Moses. For in these ancient times, which lacked so much that we are familiar with, the parent was more than he is now. He was then usually magistrate and teacher as well as father. Respect for his authority lay at the very foundation of order and security in the state. Regard for his instructions was the basis of religious knowledge. "Parents were the religious teachers of their children," it is well said, "and if they neglected their functions, or if their teaching was listened to without due reverence, there was very little to prevent the whole nation from drifting back into heathenism." No commandment was better or more steadfastly honoured in Israel than this one. The Old Testament, in many of its most solemn declarations and most beautiful characters is a witness to this. The New Testament, in some of its richest and weightiest passages (*e.g.*, Eph. v. 22—vi. 9; Col. iii. 18—iv. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 13—iii. 7) explains with careful detail the various duties involved in this commandment. It resembles the first commandment in this that, as the essence of the entire first table of the law is in the precept, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me,' so the essence of the entire second table is in the precept, 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' But there is one respect in which it differs from the other commandments and carries with it a more tender interest. While each of the other nine

may be kept as long as life lasts, there comes a time in the common course of nature, when it is impossible to keep this commandment except in thought. The parent, in ordinary circumstances, dies before the child, and the child's opportunity of honouring this law in direct and positive form ceases.

The fifth commandment is, Honour thy father and thy mother : the Decalogue now passes over from our duties towards God to our duties towards men. It makes the transition from the Divine to the human through the sacred names of *father* and *mother*. The parent is the representative of God to the child. The relation between father and child is like the relation between God, the Author of all life, and mankind. As man is made in the image of God and is dependent on Him ; so the children are in the image of the parents, and are dependent on them. The parent is the link between God and the child, and so the fifth commandment is the link between Divine duties and human. The word 'honour,' which stands at the head of this great commandment, is one of a large and generous scope. Our English version of the Bible employs it in many notable passages and in many different connections. Among others, notice how it is used of what is due to the *aged*, 'Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God' (Lev. xix. 32) ; of *widows*, 'Honour widows that are widows indeed' (1 Tim. v. 3) ; of men generally, and of the king in particular, 'Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king' (1 Pet. ii. 17). Observe, too, how it is used of God Himself, 'They that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed' (1 Sam. ii. 30) ; and of Christ's regard for His Father, 'I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me' (John viii. 49). It couples affection with reverence and fear. Here it points to a loving and respectful consideration, resting on the strong foundation of

a regard for what its objects are in the sight of God and the order of nature. It includes "respect, love, and obedience as long as childhood and youth continue, and the gradual modification and transformation of those affections and duties into higher forms as manhood and womanhood draw on." *That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*: the promise is, in the first instance, a promise to the nation—a promise of long possession of the goodly land into which God led them. But its terms suggest at the same time that it applies to individuals. So while in Deut. v. 16 we find it made to refer to the Land of Promise, length of happy days is presented by the Old Testament as the reward of filial piety. On the other hand direst evils are declared to be the penalty of filial disrespect. This is specially the case in the Book of Proverbs. There we are met by words like these: 'Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness;' and again, 'The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it' (Prov. xx. 20; xxx. 17). The promise attached to this commandment is the most direct promise connected with any of the six. This is noticed in the New Testament as a mark of peculiar dignity belonging to the fifth commandment. So Paul, looking at the long line of Mosaic precepts, both moral and positive, which were given for Israel's good, says of this one that it is 'the first commandment with promise' (Eph. vi. 2).

QUESTION 64. *WHAT is required in the fifth commandment?*

Answer. The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honour, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their

several places and relations, as superiors,^a inferiors,^b or equals.^c

^a Eph. v. 21. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

^b 1 Pet. ii. 17. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

^c Rom. xii. 10. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.

This commandment deals directly with filial duty. But it is explained to refer to much more than that. The duty of children to parents is the first and most important instance of the duty to be discharged to those above us. Hence the commandment is taken to apply in principle to what is due from all inferiors to their superiors. But, as between man and man there is something due on both sides, the commandment is understood to bear upon all the relative duties; that is, to all that is due from man to man in the different relations and stations of life.

The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honour, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations: the intention of this law, therefore, is very broad. It means that a certain honour belongs to every man in respect of a certain position given him by God, and a certain relation in which God has placed him to his fellows; and that this honour is to be held in due regard by us. But this carries with it definite duties connected with the position and relation, and these are to be attended to. So the commandment looks first to a certain temper of mind we are to cherish, and then to a certain conduct we are to exhibit towards others. It means further that by ties of nature and the constitution of society we are so connected with each other that there is no one to whom we are not bound to act in the spirit of this Divine law of 'honour.' As superiors: the highest instance of the earthly superior is the parent, and

the most sacred of all the relative duties is filial duty. This duty is to be shown to parents not merely because of their personal merits, or so far only as they are personally worthy of it, but because of the parental relation itself. God gives the father a sceptre of authority, to which the child is to render respect and submission. In the times of the Patriarchs and under the Mosaic dispensation the authority of the parent was expressed in some ways which are no longer applicable. The children might be sold into slavery in order to meet the debts of their parents (Lev. xxv. 39-41 ; 2 Kings iv. 1). The father had the right of choosing the wife for the son, as we see in the choice of Rebekah for Isaac (Gen. xxiv.). Such powers have passed away under the milder dispensation of the Gospel and in the altered circumstances of society. But the New Testament speaks no less distinctly than the Old Testament of the great principles of the Fifth Commandment, namely, the authority belonging to the parent, and the reverence and obedience due by the child. In Isaac (Gen. xxii. 6-12), Joseph (Gen. xlv. 9-13, xlvi. 29, xlvii. 12, l. 1, 14), and others, the Old Testament gives us beautiful examples of the discharge of filial duty. When Bathsheba approached him, Solomon, king though he was, rose to meet her, and 'bowed himself unto her' (1 Kings ii. 19), because she was his mother. In the matchless story of Ruth, too, we have a charming instance of daughterly duty and devotion, all the more charming that Naomi was not her mother but her mother-in-law. The New Testament, again, teaches us that the children are to obey their parents 'in all things,' that is, in everything that comes properly within the parents' rights (Col. iii. 20) ; and that this is to be 'in the Lord,' that is to say, the obedience is to be owned to be a religious duty, and is to be rendered in a Christian spirit (Eph. vi. 1). In the rebuke which it records our Lord to have given to the Pharisees in the matter

of the *Corban*, it teaches us further that one of the most sacred points in filial honour, and one from which nothing can relieve us, is the duty of caring for the support of parents in old age and poverty (Matt. xv. 4-6). And it sets Himself before us as the highest pattern of filial subjection and dutifulness (Luke ii. 51). But there are also other 'superiors' to whom the principles of this commandment apply. The Church and its ministers belong to this rank, and are to receive 'honour' as those set over us by the Lord in spiritual things. The erring brother is to 'hear' the Church (Matt. xviii. 17). The ministers of Christ are to be supported (1 Cor. ix. 11-14; Gal. vi. 6); we are to 'esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake' (1 Thess. v. 13); we are to 'obey' them and 'submit' ourselves unto them (Heb. xiii. 17); they are to be counted 'worthy of double honour' (1 Tim. v. 17). To the same rank belong also civil government and its ministers. Magistracy or civil government is of Divine appointment. Its forms differ in different communities and as the conditions of society vary. But it is itself an ordinance of God. The New Testament recognises it as such, and enforces the obligation of submission to kings and governors. See in especial the great passages on this subject in Romans xiii. 1-7, and 1 Peter ii. 13-15, which teach us that obedience to civil rulers and to the laws is a religious duty, one to be discharged 'for conscience sake,' and 'for the Lord's sake.' Inferiors: the parent, the minister, and the magistrate have corresponding duties to the child, the hearer, the subject. Each in his several station is bound to exercise his authority in accordance with the Divine purpose, in subjection to the Divine Word, and in such ways as shall secure the respect and minister to the well-being of those placed under him. Fathers, for example, are charged not to 'provoke their children unto wrath,' that is to say, not to excite the spirit of revolt by an unjust or

harsh employment of their parental authority (Eph. vi. 4). Ministers are to take the oversight of the flock of God, 'not for filthy lucre,' nor 'as being lords over God's heritage' (1 Peter v. 2, 3). Rulers are to govern in the fear of God (Exod. xviii. 21), to judge justly (Deut. xvi. 18), to defend the poor and oppressed (Exod. xxiii. 6), and to have no respect of persons (Lev. xix. 15). If Abraham is the great Biblical type of the *father*, and Paul that of the *minister*, so David, the 'man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob,' is in many respects the best Biblical example of the *king*. Nowhere shall we find a nobler or sweeter picture of what 'he that ruleth over men' should be than in those 'last words of David' which are enshrined in 2 Sam. xxiii. 1-5. The spirit of the commandment is meant to regulate other relations of a like kind, such as those between *masters* and *servants* and between *employers* and *employed*. The former are dealt with in many passages. As masters are to be just (Col. iv. 1) and to forbear threatening (Eph. vi. 9), so servants are to be subject (1 Peter ii. 18), obedient (Eph. vi. 5; Col. iii. 22), patient, and honest (Titus ii. 9, 10), serving faithfully (1 Tim. vi. 2), contentedly (1 Cor. vii. 20, 21), not 'with eye-service as men-pleasers' but 'in singleness of heart,' as the servants of Christ Himself, with 'good-will, heartily as to the Lord' (Eph. vi. 5-7; Col. iii. 22-23). What the latter should be we may see from the case of Boaz and the reapers (Ruth ii. 4). **Or equals**: this will include all such relations as those indicated by the terms husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, friends, &c. The husband, who is at once the head and the equal of the wife, is to 'honour' his wife by love, respect, and consideration, such as are witnessed in the Biblical examples of Isaac, Jacob, Elkanah, and expressed by Paul under no lower figure than that of the regard which Christ has for His Church (Eph. v. 25). The wife is to be 'subject' to her husband, and to 're-

verence' him (Eph. v. 24, 33); of which wifely honour Sarah is presented as the Old Testament pattern (1 Peter iii. 5, 6). Joseph in his forgiveness of his brethren and kindness to them, Andrew in bringing Simon to Christ (John i. 40-42), Mary and Martha and Lazarus in the sweet ministries of the home at Bethany, show us what brother and sister are designed to be. And, in the choice words of another, "at the noble name of friend we recall Jonathan, more than royal in his disregard of that throne on which he delighted to install one whom he loved with a love wonderful, passing the love of women."

QUESTION 65. *WHAT is forbidden in the fifth commandment?*

Answer. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing any thing against, the honour and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations.^a

^a Matt. xv. 4. For God eommanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that eurseth father or mother, let him die the death. V. 5. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me. V. 6. And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the eommandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ezek. xxxiv. 2. Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds, Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the floeks? V. 3. Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the floek. V. 4. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was siek, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with foree and with eruelty have ye ruled them. Rom. xiii. 8. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of: lack of concern in what is due to others, all

slackness or want of hearty interest in fulfilling our part toward them, is inconsistent with this far-reaching precept of 'honour.' We are carefully to consider what the will of God is as regards the honour and the duty to be given to others in their several stations, and, having ascertained it, we are to respect it diligently and loyally. **Or doing any thing against, the honour and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations :** violations of the fifth commandment were punished in ancient time by the severest penalties. Death was the penalty provided by the Mosaic Law for smiting, cursing, or reviling, father or mother (Exod. xxi. 15, 17). Persistent disobedience, gluttony, or drunkenness, on the part of a son, was also visited with the same punishment (Deut. xxi. 18-21). Such enactments, though suited to the condition of society then, have ceased to be so now, and are no longer in force under the Gospel. In the case of the commandments generally, we must distinguish between the precept itself and the particular ways in which the Mosaic Law provided for its observance in Israel. The former applies to all men at all times ; the latter, only to the particular dispensation and condition of society. "It is admitted," says an eminent theologian, "that the precepts of the Decalogue bind the Church in all ages ; while the specific details contained in the books of Moses, designed to point out the way in which the duty they enjoined was then to be performed, are no longer in force" (Hodge). But the prohibition continues, and other forms of retribution visit its neglect. Disobedience to parents carries its own punishment with it in injury to character, in the wrecked life, the crime, the ruin of which it often sows the seed. The contempt of superiors, the oppression of inferiors, the strifes of brethren, and all sins against the rights of others prepare a punishment for themselves, which bears witness to the sanctity of this law.

QUESTION 66. *WHAT is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?*

Answer. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment, is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.^a

a Deut. v. 16. Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Eph. vi. 2. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise). V. 3. That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

The promise as given in the shorter version of Exod. xx. 12, is a promise simply of long life in the land which God gave His people. In the longer version of Deut. v. 16 it is a promise of a prosperous life, as well as a long one, in that land. This is followed by Paul in Eph. vi. 2, 3, He at the same time omits the clause about 'the land.' Thus he makes the promise one of general application to individuals as well as to nations, and not to one people but to all.

The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity: these temporal blessings of long life and material prosperity have a large place in the Old Testament. Lord Bacon says that prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, and adversity that of the New, and there is a sense in which this is true. Length of happy days was a token of God's favour, and with God's favour it was the good of life which the Israelite desired and prayed for. So the Old Testament speaks often of it, declaring that God will 'satisfy with long life' the man who sets his love upon Him (Ps. xci. 16); while the New Testament speaks of the blessedness of enduring temptation (James i. 12), of rejoicing in per-

secution (Matt. v. 11, 12), of glorying in tribulations (Rom. v. 3). (As far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good): these are the two great conditions by which all such promises are limited, under which also all our prayers for things temporal are presented; yet these two are but one, for nothing that is not to God's glory can be for our good. **To all such as keep this commandment:** in the Decalogue itself it is a promise primarily of national welfare and continuance. But it rests on a principle that can be easily understood—the principle that the family makes the State. "It was not an assurance that every child that obeyed his parents would escape sickness and poverty, would be prosperous and attain to a good old age; it was a declaration that the prosperity, the stability, and the permanence of the nation depended on the reverence of children for their parents. The discipline of the family was intimately related to the order, the security, and the greatness of the State. Bad children would make bad citizens. If there was a want of reverence for parental authority, there would be a want of reverence for public authority. If there was disorder in the home, there would be disorder in the nation; and national disorder would lead to the destruction of national life. But if children honoured their parents, the elect nation would be prosperous, and would retain possession of the country which it had received from the hands of God" (Dale). The principle is one that knows no limit. The promise, therefore, is one that applies generally, and holds good still of individuals as well as of communities. The family is the great feeder of both Church and State. What the family is, that for the most part will these others be; and what the family itself will be, depends on the fidelity with which this commandment is kept. Filial obedience is in ordinary circumstances the earnest of a virtuous and happy life, and the grace that trains to true citizenship.

QUESTION 67. *WHICH is the sixth commandment?*

Answer. The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.^a

^a Exod. xx. 13.

The Decalogue now pronounces on the most awful offence man can be guilty of against man. At this point it touches the sacredness of life itself, and fences it round with a Divine protection. History shows us how deep has been the world's need of this commandment, how lightly human life has been handled, how slow men have been of learning its value, and honouring its sanctity. The politest nations of the ancient world were accustomed to destroy weak or defective children. The noblest of the sages, men like Plato among the Greeks, felt nothing strange in recommending such practices. High-bred Roman ladies took a fierce delight in the gladiatorial combats of the amphitheatre with their sickening bloodshed, and thought nothing of throwing their slaves for some trifling fault into the fish-ponds to feed the lampreys. Among the nations in contact with Israel, Ammonites, Moabites, Sidonians, and others, the gods were held so ruthless and men so cheap that human sacrifices prevailed to a vast extent. To the chosen people themselves, trained as they had been for generations in the debasing school of slavery, it was a necessity for their moral health that this great law of God should be published anew in the statutes which were to rule their national life.

The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill: the precept is given in the briefest and most absolute form. But its limitation is obvious. It is directed not against every kind of killing, but against murder. It is based upon these things—the sanc-

tity of human life, God's property in human life, and the brotherhood of man. We are 'made of one blood' (Acts xvii. 26), and, therefore, our neighbour's life should be sacred as our own. Life comes from God, and it remains His possession with which we have no right to interfere. Man is made in the image of God, and the dignity of man gives a sanctity to his life. So it is expressed in the Divine blessing given to Noah, where it is declared that 'whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man' (Gen. ix. 6). Wherever there has been a low view of man's origin and nature, there human life has been cheap and insecure. This Divine law of life in the Decalogue, and the Bible doctrine of what man is, have softened manners, protected man against man, and given the rights of care and consideration to the helpless and the aged.

QUESTION 68. *WHAT is required in the sixth commandment?*

Answer. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life,^a and the life of others.^b

^a Eph. v. 28. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself. V. 29. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.

^b 1 Kings xviii. 4. For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.

Life is the gift of God, and to Him alone it belongs to determine its length and to take it away. Life is a man's all on earth, his all of power, opportunity, and attainment. It is the season given him for working the work of God (John ix. 4). Above all it is the seedtime of eternity. To lose life is to lose all that earth offers or renders possible. Hence the loss

of life is the heaviest and most dreaded of all losses, and the preservation of life is one of the first duties.

The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life : because life is what we have stated it to be, it is obvious that we are not free to think lightly of it, or neglect it, or fling it away. We are not merely at liberty, but under obligation to protect it. This must be done by defending it against attack, by securing it against danger, by attention to what is necessary in food, raiment, and rest, by regard for the natural laws of health, by abstinence from all indulgences and excesses which are hostile to it. This, too, is not to be a chance interest with us, or a matter of small concern. It is to be one of our serious and constant *endeavours*. Yet, imperative as this requirement is, it has its limitations, as the word 'lawful' indicates. Not even with the view of preserving so sacred a trust as life, are we justified in doing anything hurtful to conscience or inconsistent with other moral laws. **And the life of others :** each of us is in some way his 'brother's keeper.' The claim which Cain denied in the case of Abel is the claim which our fellow-men have upon us by the authority of God (Gen. iv. 9). We are required to satisfy it by helping them in circumstances of danger, by defending them against the violence of others, by instructing them in what is needful to the preservation of life, by conducting ourselves towards them in peaceable and considerate ways. But this again with the qualification that the ways which we adopt be 'lawful,' not conflicting with our duty to God, our own fidelity to truth, or our larger obligations to society. The ways in which effect is given to these requirements may vary in different times. So there were certain provisions connected with this commandment under the Mosaic economy which have long ceased to be applicable to the changed circumstances of the times, but which were wise, merciful, and necessary then. For

example, in times when *national* life was in its infancy, and government was of a simpler form, and manners were rougher, the execution of justice upon a murderer was left to the nearest of kin to the person murdered. This was the law of 'the avenger of blood,' a law which has prevailed among men wandering about in tribes and living under the patriarchal forms of rule. It was in use before the Ten Commandments were given from Sinai, and the people had been accustomed to it. Moses therefore gave it a place in his legal system as a law with which their ideas of justice were too intimately connected to make it safe at once to dispense with it. But he girt it about at the same time with important safeguards. It was allowed to apply only to cases of intentional and malicious killing. The question of guilt was to be decided not by the friends of the murdered man, but by a regular tribunal of the congregation or the elders. A further check was put upon the passion of private revenge by the requirement that there should be at least two witnesses giving the same evidence. The risk of allowing the rich man a license which the poor man could not have, was prevented by the provision that no money payment could compensate for murder. The sanctity of life and the authority of the commandment were impressed upon the moral sense of men by the provision that a man judged guilty of murder should find no protection even if he fled to the altar (Exod. xxi. 14). And in order to teach men to distinguish between homicide and murder, the institution of the Levitical *cities of refuge* was set up. These were six in number—viz., Kedesh in Naphtali, Shechem in Mount Ephraim, Hebron in Judah, on the west side of the Jordan, with Bezer in Reuben, Ramoth-Gilead in Gad, and Golan in Bashan on the other side. To one of these the slayer fled, and if he was judged innocent of wilful murder, he had the privi-

lege of security from the hand of the avenger of blood so long as he kept within the refuge. When the high priest died in whose time he had fled to the asylum, he could leave the city and return in safety to his own land (Exod. xxi. 12-14; Num. xxxv. 9-34; Deut. xix. 1-13). So the Mosaic Law educated the conscience of Israel, and prepared men for other ways of honouring the principle of this great commandment.

QUESTION 69. *WHAT is forbidden in the sixth commandment?*

Answer. The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life,^a or the life of our neighbour unjustly,^b or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.

^a Acts xvi. 28. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here.

^b Gen. ix. 6. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

Men have not always been of one mind regarding the interpretation of the sixth commandment. There have been, and there still continue to be, certain differences of opinion even among Christian people with respect to the things which are declared unlawful by it. There are some practices now, which might seem at once to be entirely inconsistent with this precept, but which have nevertheless prevailed long among men. **The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life:** the greatest and most cultured of ancient peoples, even the Greeks and the Romans, regarded suicide not as a crime, but as an act of courage. Revelation teaches us to regard it as one of the most awful of offences against the Divine law. It is to take into our own hands a power which belongs to God. It is to flee from the trust committed to us by Him. It

is to anticipate the time appointed by Him for our judgment. It has all the guilt of self-murder. In Ahithophel the Old Testament gives us an instance of the man who seeks refuge from despair in suicide (2 Sam. xvii. 23). In Judas Iscariot the New Testament gives us the most terrible instance of a man who seeks the same refuge from remorse for the worst of crimes (Matt. xxvii. 5 ; Acts i. 18). **Or the life of our neighbour unjustly** : this covers not only wilful murder, but *duelling*, a practice productive of vast misery, once rife in our own country as well as in others, but now happily condemned by the moral sense of our land. It is indeed a double crime—a crime against our own life, and a crime against our neighbour's. To take a man's life or risk the loss of our own for the mere satisfaction of what is called 'honour' can be justified by nothing. It is wilful contempt of the ordinary provisions of law and justice established in society. It is a sinful attempt to impose the penalty of death upon offences to which it does not apply. The word 'unjustly' in this clause is to be carefully noticed. It means that the prohibition extends only to cases of wilful and malicious killing. It does not bear upon cases of homicide or self-defence. To preserve our life is an instinct of nature and a law of God, and if our life cannot otherwise be preserved, it is lawful to defend it even at the cost of that of its assailant. The term 'unjustly' is inserted also to meet such cases as that of *war* and the infliction of *capital punishment*. It is the Christian duty to seek peace, and, as far as possible, to live in peace with others. 'If it be possible,' says Paul, 'as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men' (Rom. xii. 19). It is one of the great objects of the Gospel to make wars cease upon earth. Hence it is held by some that Christian men and Christian nations are not at liberty to engage in war under any circumstances. But this has never been the view

taken by the Church of Christ as such. War indeed is one of the sorest ills from which men suffer, and there are many kinds of war—all wars of ambition, oppression, revenge, and injustice, which are entirely inconsistent with the law of Christ. But neither the Bible nor reason declares war to be in all possible circumstances unjustifiable. Neither the Old Testament nor the New stamps the profession of the soldier as one that cannot righteously be held; and if the right of self-defence belongs to the individual, the same right must belong to the nation. So, too, it is affirmed by some that it is wrong to punish any crime by death. But while it is allowed that the penalty of death should not be inflicted except for the worst of crimes, it does not appear that capital punishment, inflicted as an act of justice, and with a view to the preservation of society, is absolutely forbidden by any Divine law. The Mosaic law prescribed it in the most positive terms as the penalty which no murderer should escape (Exod. xxi. 12, 14; Lev. xxiv. 17; Deut. xix. 11, 13). The New Testament represents Paul as recognising death to be a just penalty in certain circumstances (Acts xxv. 11). In Rom. xiii. 4 it is also said of the magistrate that he ‘beareth not the sword in vain,’ by which it is meant that he has power over life and death. **Or whatsoever tendeth thereunto**: the commandment contents itself with mentioning the gravest instance of the evil it condemns. But in condemning that it condemns everything that leads to it, and everything hostile to that respect for man’s nature and man’s life which is its principle. So in the Sermon on the Mount our Lord explains that we may be guilty of breaking this law not merely by actually taking our neighbour’s life, but by harbouring thoughts of murder in our heart, by cherishing unjustifiable anger, or by treating one contemptuously (Matt. v. 21-25). These evil tempers are the springs of murder, and are forbidden

by the broad law which forbids that great crime. The Larger Catechism therefore declares that this commandment forbids all such things as these—‘the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions, distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labour, and recreations; provoking words, oppression, quarrelling, striking, wounding, and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.’

QUESTION 70. *WHICH is the seventh commandment?*

Answer. The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.^a

^a Exod. xx. 14.

The Decalogue passes at once from *life* itself to that which is essential to the highest good of life, namely, purity. Idolatry and immorality go naturally together. Nations ignorant of the true God have been careless of the sacred laws of chastity. Not only such races as those surrounding ancient Israel, but even the great peoples of Greece and Rome, were the slaves of the vilest passions, and openly practised the most debasing immoralities. The Old Testament, in setting the true God before Israel as the one object of worship, set before them also a standard of personal and family purity to which other nations were strangers. The New Testament enforces the same by still more solemn sanctions and higher reasons.

The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery: the foundation of this commandment is the sanctity of marriage. The virtue of the individual, the health of society, the well-being of the

nation, the life of the Church depend, in the most vital way, upon what the family-relation is among a people. The Divine law, therefore, now casts a fence around the conjugal tie, as, in the fifth commandment, it has already thrown its protection round the parental tie. The Mosaic economy prescribed death as the penalty for offences against the law of marriage (Lev. xx. 10). It placed this commandment in the same rank with the former six. The worship of any other god but the true God, the use of images in worship, blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, confirmed disobedience to parents, murder, adultery, were all alike punished with death. So breaches of this seventh commandment were stamped as among the worst of sins, of the same standard of evil as idolatry and murder. Marriage, too, was pronounced a sacred thing, to dishonour which was to be guilty of the most heinous sin.

QUESTION 71. *WHAT is required in the seventh commandment?*

Answer. The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity, in heart, speech, and behaviour.^a

^a 1 Cor. vii. 2. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. V. 3. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence; and likewise also the wife unto the husband. V. 5. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. V. 34. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. V. 36. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not; let them marry. Col. iv. 6. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. 1 Pct. iii. 2. While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

The word 'chastity' comes from a Latin word which means *clean* or *pure*. The high requirement of purity is one that the Bible urges for a variety of reasons, and with a solemnity of appeal which unmistakably marks its supreme importance. Few things are so strongly or so repeatedly enforced in the Divine Word as this.

The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity : in this matter we have a duty of the most solemn moment, not only to ourselves but to others. So much is everything that is best in life and most vital to the good of society connected with this question of purity that we must think of our neighbour's position with no less reverence than our own. The interests of the two are indeed one, for sins against this law cannot be sins against ourselves without being also sins against our neighbour. **In heart, speech, and behaviour.** The purity which we have to preserve with all holy care is one to cover our whole life and penetrate the entire self. To be what it ought to be, it must be first and above all things an inward grace. It must have its seat in the heart if it is to rule the life with effect. If it is there it will sanctify our words and our deeds. The sweet fountain of chaste thought and feeling will sweeten the streams of speech and action. Only the pure Spirit of God can help us to reach this holy grace, which will watch like an angel over our life. So the Psalmist's prayer is, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence ; and take not thy holy Spirit from me" (Ps. li. 10, 11).

QUESTION 72. *WHAT is forbidden in the seventh commandment ?*

Answer. The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.^a

α Matt. xv. 19. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies. Matt. v. 28. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Eph. v. 3. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints. V. 4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.

The commandment speaks only of a single violation of the law of purity, the one which strikes at the very foundation of the moral health of society. But the greater offence includes the less, and what applies to the sacred relation of husband and wife applies to other relations.

The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts: the prohibition begins rightly with the *thoughts*; for the evil thought allowed to rest in the mind inflames the evil appetite, which is ever ready to take fire in our corrupt nature. Our Lord teaches us, indeed, that to cherish the unchaste thought or the wanton desire, has all the guilt of a breach of this law at the very centre of our being—the heart (Matt. v. 28). **Words and actions:** if unchaste thoughts are the instruments of temptation to ourselves, unchaste words are often winged arrows of temptation to others. Everything that is foul, immodest, or indelicate in speech is to be zealously avoided, both because of its own unworthiness and because of the evil it works in others. We influence each other mightily by our words, and by our words God will judge us. ‘He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction’ (Prov. xiii. 3). Our Lord gives us the most solemn statement of this when He declares to the Pharisees, ‘But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned’ (Matt. xii. 36, 37). Unchaste ‘actions,’ whether secret or open, whether more

or less flagrant, are condemned in every form, and in the strongest possible terms, by the Word of God. Breaches of this law have the first place in the terrible list of the 'works of the flesh,' of which Paul declares that 'they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God' (Gal. v. 19-21). In forbidding these things, the commandment also forbids all over-indulgence of appetite, all weakening luxuriousness of living, all excess in eating and drinking, and everything else that can in any way minister to sensuality. The New Testament sets before us the highest possible motive for preserving a perfect purity, when it teaches us that the Holy Spirit of God dwells in us, and that to defile the body is to defile God's temple (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17). But the Bible nowhere forbids marriage, or speaks of the unmarried estate as superior to the married. The Church of Rome magnifies the virtue of celibacy, and honours it as a higher standard of life. But this is to gainsay the wisdom of the Creator, who in the beginning made man male and female. It is to take from the sanctity of an institution which Christ Himself tells us is of God's own appointment, and which He pronounces so sacred that it is not to be interfered with save for offences absolutely contrary to its nature and intention (Matt. xix. 4-9). It is also to contradict experience. For on the one hand experience has laid bare the dangers and corruptions which have clung to the Romish practice, and on the other hand it has shown us that, in the case of most men and women, the married estate is the school in which some of the highest qualities of character are best acquired.

QUESTION 73. *WHICH is the eighth commandment?*

Answer. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.

a Exod. xx. 15.

From the chief moral good of life, namely, purity, the Decalogue passes next to the material good of life which we term *property*. There is a fitness in the place assigned to this commandment,—so near the one which deals with chastity. For it has often been seen that a denial of the rights of property is accompanied by a denial of the sanctity of marriage and a revolt against the *family* as the Divine order of life.

The eighth commandment is, **Thou shalt not steal**: the Divine Law thus puts its protective arm around the right of property. By ‘property’ we mean something that is wholly and exclusively our own; and by the right of property we mean a title to the exclusive possession of something. This is a right that, in one form or other, has been generally recognised and acted upon by men. It has often been put to the worst of uses, and a reason for it has sometimes been sought in wrong directions—in mere might, in utility, in expediency, in the common consent of men, or in the laws which man himself makes. But it has been acknowledged by the mass of men in all conditions of society, and Scripture shows us that it has its foundation in the will of God, He has created us with the natural conviction that what we acquire by our toil is our own and not our neighbour’s. He has so constituted society, that its security and well-being seem dependent upon the observance of this right, and He has so made the individual that he requires this as an encouragement to exertion, and an incentive to habits of carefulness and forethought. The right of property, therefore, is a Divine right, in so far as it has its basis in the nature which God has given us. As such it is recognised throughout His Word, and is protected by an express precept of the moral law.

QUESTION 74. *WHAT is required in the eighth commandment?*

Answer. The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.^a

^a Gen. xxx. 30. For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the Lord hath blessed thee since my coming: and now, when shall I provide for mine own house also? 1 Tim. v. 8. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Lev. xxv. 35. And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Deut. xxii. 1. Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. V. 2. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not; then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. V. 3. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass, and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself. V. 4. Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again. V. 5. The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God. Exodus xxiii. 4. If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. V. 5. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him; thou shalt surely help with him. Gen. xlvii. 14. And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. V. 20. And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's.

The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves: God designs us for a life of industry, and He means us to enjoy the fruit of our toil. He places us in a particular condition of life, in which we are to maintain ourselves. The commandment recognises it as at once a right and a duty by honest diligence in our several callings to secure our independence, provide for ourselves and those who belong to our care, and improve our 'outward estate' or position in life. It binds us to no vow of poverty,

neither does it condemn the making of wealth, if it be lawfully acquired and properly employed. The Bible has many a counsel to diligence in our several callings. See such passages as Prov. x. 4, xii. 24, 27, xxvii. 23; Eccles. ix. 10. **And others:** if the Bible regards property as a *right*, it represents it also as a *trust*. It is neither to be acquired nor used for merely selfish ends. The rights and interests of others are to be considered in the possession and employment of it. So when Paul says 'Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good,' he states that the object of it all is this, 'that he may have to give to him that needeth' (Eph. iv. 28). The commandment means further that, if in anything we have deprived our neighbour of what is his due we shall make restitution to him, as Zaccheus was ready to do (Luke xix. 8). But it does not ask us to have all things in common. It has been attempted at times to abolish all private property, and enforce a community of goods; and it has been thought by some that the case recorded in Acts iv. 34-37 favours this. But such surrender of individual property and holding all things in common as we find reported there, was of a different kind. It was not an arrangement forced upon the individual or established by law, but a free expression of the love that glorified the early Church. It endured but for a brief time, and it seems to have been confined to the Church of Jerusalem.

QUESTION 75. *WHAT is forbidden in the eighth commandment?*

Answer. The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbour's wealth or outward estate.^a

^a Prov. xxi. 17. He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man; he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich. Prov. xxiii. 20. Be not

among wine-bibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh. V. 21. For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. Prov. xxviii. 19. He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread; but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough. Eph. iv. 28. Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own: this points on the one hand to such vices as idleness, and on the other to such as wastefulness, riotous living, &c. The former are condemned in many passages besides these given as proof-texts. See, for example, Prov. xviii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 11. Our Lord's great parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke xv. 11, &c.) shows us what the latter are in His judgment. **Or our neighbour's wealth or outward estate:** the commandment is directed further against all dishonest methods of dealing, all extortion and oppression, all unfaithfulness in executing work which we undertake, as well as theft and robbery themselves. It forbids not only all that 'doth' actually deprive our neighbour of his due, but even all that 'may' do so, all that tends that way. Hence the Larger Catechism explains it as prohibiting all 'inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods, distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them.' 'A false balance,' it is said, 'is abomination to the Lord; but a just weight is His delight' (Prov. xi. 1). Again, 'Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance' (Deut. xix. 14). And again, 'That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you, and testified' (1 Thess. iv. 6).

QUESTION 76. *WHICH is the ninth commandment?*

Answer. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.^a

^a Exod. xx. 16.

From property, as one of man's rights, the Decalogue passes on to the great requirement of truth between man and man. It establishes the sacred right of a good name, and throws its shield around it.

The ninth commandment is, **Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour** : this commandment has a certain connection with the third. They both deal with the use of speech. The one looks to what it should be in things Divine, the other to what it should be in things human. They differ in this, that while we cannot hurt God though we take His holy name in vain, our evil words directed against our fellowmen have the power of inflicting dire loss and injury on them. It speaks of one particular offence in speech, that of giving false witness, which is an offence of a specially injurious nature. But the principle expressed with regard to this particular case holds good of all other offences against truth between ourselves and our fellows. It has a very special bearing upon what concerns the action of courts of justice. It is not limited, however, in its scope to that, but looks to the whole obligation of truth between man and man. There is one point, too, in which this commandment may carry with it even a more permanent obligation than some of these already considered. For it deals with something which makes us like God Himself, and which can in no circumstances be dispensed with. "The command to keep truth inviolate belongs," it is well said, "to a different class from those relating to the Sabbath, to marriage, or to property. These are founded on the permanent relations of man in the present state of existence. They are not in their

own nature immutable. God may at any time suspend or modify them. But truth is at all times sacred, because it is one of the essential attributes of God, so that whatever militates against, or is hostile to truth, is in opposition to the very nature of God" (Hodge).

QUESTION 77. *WHAT is required in the ninth commandment?*

Answer. The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man,^a and of our own and our neighbour's good name,^b especially in witness-bearing.^c

a Zech. viii. 16. These are the things that ye shall do, Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates.

b 3 John Ver. 12. Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

c Prov. xiv. 5. A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies. V. 25. A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.

The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man: our first duty here is, in our intercourse with other men, to 'maintain' truth by speaking of things exactly as they are, and reporting events exactly as they happen, without perverting, colouring, or concealing aught. Our second duty is to 'promote' truth by encouraging the same sincerity in others, and discouraging the opposite. God desires truth 'in the inward parts' (Ps. li. 6). **And of our own and our neighbour's good name:** a man's character or reputation is one of his dearest possessions. To wound him there is to do him one of the worst of wrongs. We are to guard our own 'good name,' therefore, with the utmost care, zealously avoiding everything likely to injure it, and pursuing everything likely to preserve

it. Nor are we to be less concerned about the 'good name' of others, upholding it by all just means and abstaining from everything hurtful to it. **Especially in witness-bearing**: there are many circumstances in which we are called to have this respect for our neighbour's good name. Differences, misunderstandings, and contentions arise at times between man and man in the ordinary course of private life, and the requirement to keep perfect truthfulness towards others, and to do perfect justice to them, becomes then a difficult one to honour. Nor is it less so in the case of public controversies which at times divide men in matters political, civil, or ecclesiastical. But the most important occasion for the exercise of the grace of perfect truthfulness is in courts of justice, where the liberty, the property, the reputation, or the life of others may depend on the evidence we offer.

QUESTION 78. *WHAT is forbidden in the ninth commandment?*

Answer. The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbour's good name.^a

^a 1 Sam. xvii. 28. And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men: and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. Lev. xix. 16. Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people; neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the Lord. Ps. xv. 3. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth: this is a large statement, covering not only open falsehood, but everything that is in any degree inconsistent with perfect truthfulness, or hurtful to it—hypocrisy, dissimulation, doubtful and

equivocal statements, breaking of promises, flattery, and the like. Or injurious to our own or our neighbour's good name: boastful words, and all speaking of ourselves either too highly or too meanly, are forbidden as hurtful to our own good name. Calumny, slander, detraction, back-biting, tale-bearing, scoffing, reviling, censorious judgments, spreading of evil reports, and many other things equally hostile to the good reputation of our neighbour are also covered by this prohibition. Concealing truth or stating untruth before the tribunals of justice is a specially grievous breach of this law. It implies not only injury to our fellows, but contempt of God Himself. For it is by the Divine will that justice is decreed, and the judge or magistrate is 'the minister of God—a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil' (Rom. xiii. 4). Liars are among those of whom it is said that they 'shall be cast into the lake of fire,' and that they 'shall in no wise enter the heavenly city' (Rev. xx. 15, xxi. 27). There are, indeed, few things so largely dealt with by the New Testament as the grace of truth and the government of the tongue. See how Paul urges the duty of truthfulness on the ground that 'we are members one of another' (Eph. iv. 25), and that we have 'put on the new man' (Col. iii. 9, 10). See too, how James makes the bridling of the tongue the test of the reality of a man's religion (James i. 26), and bids us speak no evil one of another, because 'he that speaketh evil of his brother . . . speaketh evil of the law' (iv. 11).

QUESTION 79. *WHICH is the tenth commandment?*

Answer. The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-

servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.^a

^a Exod. xx. 17.

The last commandment is the deepest of all the ten ; it takes us down to the fountains of desire, and touches the most secret sources of unholy actions, words, and thoughts. "As soon as we earnestly grapple with it," it is justly said, "it springs into vast spiritual proportions, which are seen to include all the other commandments."

The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet : the other commandments, while they imply great principles which admit of wide application, deal with certain specific offences in thought, word, or deed. This one carries us beyond all such things, beyond the arena of speech and action, beyond even the deeper arena of thought, and lays its hand upon that which is beneath all these. It grapples with the unseen movements and impulses of the heart, which stimulate and regulate our thinking, speaking, and doing. Covetousness is the evil desire of personal advantage, the selfish wish to have what is another's. In forbidding this the commandment, it is well said, "pursues evil to its very source and condemns it there, and there it bids the inmost feeling of the heart be on the side of right and truth." Paul speaks of the covetous man as an idolater (Eph. v. 5). He is this in so far as he erects wealth into a god, and makes everything yield to self by "a sordid species of self-worship." Our Lord strictly charges us to 'take heed of covetousness ; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth' (Luke xii. 15). **Thy neighbour's house :** the word 'house' is probably to be taken here in the larger sense, including all that makes the family and belongs to the household. The clauses which follow, therefore, explain this one

in detail. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass: the wife, the servant, the cattle, are all parts of the 'house,' and are mentioned by name, that there may be no mistake regarding the breadth of the law. Nor anything that is thy neighbour's: a sentence added to bring clearly within the sweep of this law the entire possessions of our neighbour of whatever kind they be, whether forming part of the 'house' proper or not. This commandment, therefore, concerns itself with objects which the eighth also has in view. But it goes far beyond it, being meant to arrest, not the mere thievish or self-seeking act itself, but the desire which prompts it. So it aims at catching evil in its unrevealed beginnings. Its office has been justly explained to be this—"to condemn the first step to countless open or secret offences which no law can enumerate and punish."

QUESTION 80. *WHAT is required in the tenth commandment?*

Answer. The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition,^a with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbour, and all that is his.^b

^a Heb. xiii. 5. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. 1 Tim. vi. 6. But godliness with contentment is great gain.

^b Job xxxi. 29. If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him. Rom. xii. 15. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 1 Tim. i. 5. Now, the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. 1 Cor. xiii. 4. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. V. 5. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; V. 6. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. V. 7. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition: the Catechism presents 'contentment' as the grace which should be sought as a defence against the evils condemned by this commandment. Rightly so. For it is more directly opposed to covetousness than is liberality or anything else. It will be impossible for us to covet if we are entirely satisfied with what God has given us, and do not look upon other things as more desirable than those we have. This grace of contentment is what inspired Agur's prayer (Prov. xxx. 7, 9). It is the lesson learned by Paul, as he tells us in the proof-text. **With a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbour, and all that is his:** where the one spirit reigns, the other can scarcely fail to be. If we are heartily content with our own condition, we shall think well of our neighbour, rejoice in his success, respect what he has, and be ready to further his interest. If we attain to the 'right' in our frame of spirit toward him, we shall not find it difficult to attain also to the 'charitable,' thinking the best of himself, and of anything of his that may seem open to question.

QUESTION 81. *WHAT is forbidden in the tenth commandment?*

Answer. The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate,^a envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour,^b and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.^c

^a 1 Kings xxi. 4. And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers: and he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. Esther v. 13. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. 1 Cor. x. 10. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

^b Gal. v. 26. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one

another, envying one another. James iii. 14. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. V. 16. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work.

c Rom. vii. 7. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. V. 8. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. Rom. xiii. 9. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Deut. v. 21. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbour's.

The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate : this points to the sin of repining, complaining against God, murmuring at the lot He assigns us. The Old Testament shows us how prone the Israelites were to fall into this sin, and how they suffered for it when they were in the wilderness, at the Graves of Lust (Num. xi. 33, 34), after the return of the spies (Num. xiv. 29, 30), and on the journey by Hor (Num. xxi. 4-6). Paul recalls these things, and solemnly warns the Corinthian Christians against this spirit, lest they should 'be destroyed of the destroyer' (1 Cor. x. 10). **Envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour :** envy is one of the meanest and most odious of sins. It implies that we grudge others what they have, and would strip them of it if we could. It is forbidden as "a real cancer of the soul; producing torture, and eating out all right feeling" (Hodge). **And all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his :** by *inordinate motions* is meant unregulated or excessive movements of feeling or impulses of desire. These are not to be indulged, because it is only by conquering these that we can preserve ourselves from temptations to violate this law.

This commandment is the great test commandment of the last six. For it bids us try our conduct

toward our neighbour by the most searching of all measures, that of our motives, feelings, and desires. Hence it is the one that more than all others reveals to us our inability to keep the law, makes us conscious of sin, and constrains us to seek a righteousness better than our own. In condemning discontent with our lot, it works in us a salutary discontent with ourselves. Thus it acted in the case of Paul, who shows us that it was not until the law came to him with the word, 'thou shalt not covet,' that the sense of sin and moral bondage rose upon him (Rom. vii. 7). He could say of himself that he had not set other gods before him, that he had not been an idolater, a profane man, or a Sabbath-breaker, that he had not dishonoured his parents, that he had not been a murderer, an adulterer, a thief, or a false-witness. But he could not say that he had not coveted what belongs to others. Thus he was made to see that his own obedience to the law could avail nothing, and he found in Christ that which was lacking in himself. So this last commandment is the most spiritual of the ten, and the one that acts most surely as 'a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ' (Gal. iii. 24).

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